



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

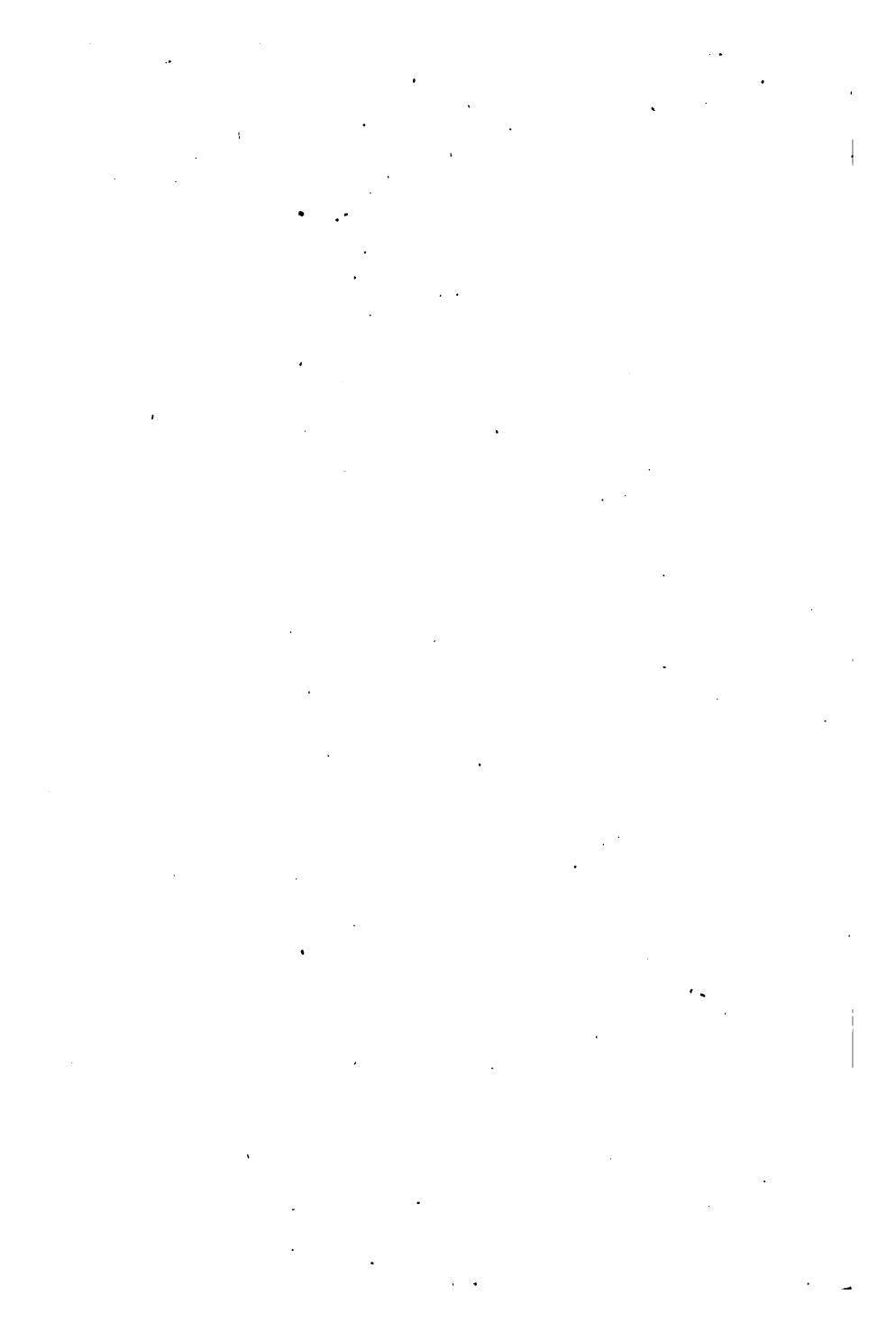
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





600059874\$





THE BANK PARLOUR.



THE BANK PARLOUR:
OR,
EXPERIENCES
IN
THE LIFE OF A LATE BANKER.

BY A. B. BLACKIE.

LONDON :
JAMES BLACKWOOD, PATERNOSTER ROW.
1861.

[*The Right of Translation is Reserved.*]

250. f. 101.



TO
WILLIAM J. GARNETT, ESQ., M.P.,

ETC., ETC., ETC.,

THE FOLLOWING NARRATIVES

ARE RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

AS

A SMALL MARK OF ESTEEM AND REGARD,

FROM

HIS SINCERE AND AFFECTIONATE FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	9
THE DISCARDED.	
CHAP. I.—Pecuniary Embarrassments	13
II.—Early Affections	20
THE HIGHLAND LAIRD.	
CHAP. I.—The Old Chieftain's Castle	26
II.—Deer-Stalking—Chieftain's Banquet	85
THE FATAL DUEL.	
CHAP. I.—The Mountain Sylph	46
II.—The Mountain Storm—Hostile Meeting	55
THE NABOB'S TRUST.	
CHAP. I.—An Unexpected Visitor	67
II.—The Salmon Stream	74
III.—The Nabob's Tale	84
IV.—The Moors	96
V.—The Will	107
THE RECLAIMED.	
CHAP. I.—Wild Oats	115
II.—A Virago	129
III.—Marvellous Events	140
IV.—The Foundling's Tale	149
V.—The Happy Meeting	161
THE HIGHWAY ATTACK	168
THE RUN ON THE BANK	180

	PAGE
THE OLD MAN'S STRATAGEM.	
CHAP. I.—The Settlement	190
II.—Cold Hearts	199
III.—The Eclaircissement	210
THE LOST HEIR.	
CHAP. I.—The Reprobate	221
II.—The Heir Restored	229
THE RETURN FROM THE DEAD.	
CHAP. I.—The Overwhelming Blow	237
II.—The Shameless Hypocrite	248
III.—Virtue Rewarded	258
IV.—The Haunted Chamber	265
THE BANK ROBBERY.	
CHAP. I.—The Conviction	278
II.—The Robbers' Den	290
THE DISUNITED FAMILY.	
CHAP. I.—Family Brawls	298
II.—Peace Restored	307
THE FORGERS.	
CHAP. I.—Desperation and Crime	318
II.—Villany Unveiled and Punished	327
THE WIDOW'S SON.	
CHAP. I.—The Puritan Family	336
II.—The Midnight Burglar	344
III.—The Royal Pardon	355

INTRODUCTION.

THERE are few positions in life in which we can be placed, where such ample opportunities are afforded of forming a just and correct estimate of character, and of studying the different phases of the human heart, as the vocation of a banker; and it has often occurred to me as more than extraordinary, that up to this time I am not aware of any attempt having ever been made to throw open the sacred portals, to enter the precincts, and expose the secrets and mysteries of the "*bank parlour*," (for country bankers can boast of *their* "sanctum," as well as that most respectable old lady in Threadneedle street.)

The general world, looking calmly on with its usual indifference, is little aware of the struggles, harassings, and privations that have attended the first outset in life of the now opulent but once humble tradesman; who, from industry, perseverance, and stern integrity, raised himself to occupy a status in society, which at one period of his life he could scarcely have dreamed of as being possible for him ever to attain; and it is even more marvellous to record the fall from his high estate of him who embarked on the stormy ocean of commerce, with fortune, influence, and every advantage, to all appearance, that this world could afford; nor is it

known to those unconnected with the business of life, the many shifts that are resorted to by the desperate speculator, and the compulsory, humiliating, and often degrading means, used even by the proud and honourable spirit, to sustain for a little longer that delicate, nice, but important usage called CREDIT.

Whilst lately employed in committing to the flames an accumulation of old letters and papers, I unexpectedly stumbled upon the memoranda (long since forgotten) upon which are based the following narratives. They were jottings from after-dinner conversations, *tête à tête* with an old and valued friend with whom I had for years been in constant and close intercourse. He had had a long and successful career in business as a north-country banker, for a period extending over half a century, and, from his adroit and agile assiduity in business, acquired a rapid and large fortune, principally from his having studied attentively the movements of the government funds, the nature and fluctuations of which were constantly changing during the French Revolution, and the protracted peninsular war. His experience and sagacity in this branch of his business was constantly on the alert, which gave him occasion to spend a great portion of his time in London, whilst in his absence his only partner, Sir Walter M——, a wealthy and influential baronet, took charge of the local business of the bank.

To those unacquainted with the nature and habits of my worthy old friend during the latter part of his life, his character would appear a strange and singular anomaly—a mixture of odd paradox, of piety and jollity, with an arch and ever-fertile humour, a thorough knowledge of the world, with a pure, artless, and simple disposition of mind, firm in resolve, and often stern in

business when it became necessary; whilst an appeal was never made to his heart in vain, to which many a now thriving man, whom he started in the world, can bear testimony. In the early part of his life he possessed nerve that could have faced a lion in the desert, whilst I have seen him weep bitterly over the tiny couch of a favourite sick child.

He regularly visited the different branches of the Bank on alternate days of the week, which were at equal distances from his country residence, where he returned in the evenings often to very late dinners. It was on those occasions, whilst discussing our wine and walnuts, that he was wont to unbend to me in the relation of those Narratives and Experiences, which I shall endeavour to transcribe as far as my memory and documents will serve me, to the best of my ability, in as nearly as possible his own off-hand, matter-of-fact vernacular; although I fear I shall fall far short in imparting that interest in them which he did to myself from his quaint and racy style—the humour and wit he infused into all his ludicrous descriptions—the *naïveté* in his delineation of female beauty—the sweet sensations of the tender passion—and the pathos with which he represented his scenes of emotion, difficulty, and affliction.

The pleasantest society to him was that of the cheerful and the young, with whom he entered with spirit into every frolic, at the same time never losing the opportunity of inculcating wisdom by well-timed and salutary advice, intermixed with appropriate maxims and proverbs, in which he abounded; and many of his axioms are so indelibly impressed on my mind, that I shall endeavour to apply them as he used to do in the course of the following tales.

His gentle, tender, and kindly manner was such as invariably to attract children to him, and he never was more in his element than when surrounded by a group of them relating a tale of joy or woe, by which he could either bathe or brighten their little features at will.

The term of life allotted to humanity, threescore and ten, with a few additional years, had passed over his head at the period when he related to me the very interesting reminiscences of his eventful life, and, whilst so engaged, would be seemingly inspired with all the buoyance of youth ; and he used to remark, that when he took a retrospect of the troubled waters he had passed through in his little bark, and reached the calm and peaceful haven he now enjoyed, it afforded him the confirming proof, that the startling events of real life surpassed by far the most thrilling descriptions in the inventions of fiction.

Cicero tells us that his composition of his "Treatise on Old Age," from his youth upwards, made him forget the infirmities of age ; and my venerable friend appeared always animated by a similar influence whilst recounting to me those incidents of his life which I have so inadequately attempted to narrate, but which, being alive to all their imperfections, and without literary pretensions, I trust may obtain a share of public indulgence. Should this prove the case, I may be encouraged to resume my pen in the treatment of a considerable portion of my memoranda not yet encroached upon.

A. B. B.

THE BANK PARLOUR.

The Discarded.

CHAPTER I.—PECUNIARY EMBARRASMENTS.

THE life of a banker would not fall much to be envied, were the routine of the legal part of his business brought always under his immediate observation ; but those steady, settled, and necessary rules by which it is governed, are almost invariably conducted by the subordinates, and left to *their* discretion, and, except in special cases, are seldom represented to the principal.

A Major Tennant, of Wilton Park, had long been a customer at the bank. He possessed a fine old freehold estate, yielding about three thousand pounds per annum. He was my personal friend and near neighbour. He kept a most regular account for several years, but by degrees it became less and less so, until at last he commenced a system of passing drafts in anticipation of his incoming rents, often to a large amount ; these were frequently allowed to remain unpaid for weeks and months after maturity, until I was one day obliged to remonstrate with him ; and was induced to do so from having learned that he had taken to horse-racing, and lost large sums, in his turf transactions, to various noblemen and gentlemen, who I knew made betting the business of their lives. In fact, poor Tennant had got into the meshes of their net, and I warned him well against the consequences, which proved unavailing, as he became deeper and deeper involved, and eventually seemed to have become reckless of credit and character. He had

casually met, and at last formed an intimate acquaintance with, a Captain Fitzmorris, who some months previously had come to reside in the neighbourhood, and had taken a lovely cottage on the banks of our romantic lake, near the town, which he had furnished most tastefully, and had so beautified and embellished its gardens and grounds, as to make it appear almost like a little paradise planted in a wilderness. He lived very retired, and was never scarcely seen excepting with his wife on his arm, a most lovely creature, about two-and-twenty years of age, and a sweet little fair-haired boy about three: he was himself a fine noble-looking man, about five-and-twenty, and gossip as usual was rife as to who or what he was. However, no one seemed to know; there were some whispers about a runaway marriage; and his laundress mysteriously hinted that there were peculiar marks on some of his linens.

I had met Captain Fitzmorris only twice—once at a county-meeting dinner, and the second time at the table of Lord S——, where I was placed next to him, and was much fascinated at once by his engaging manners as by his intellectual conversation. We were afterwards merely bowing acquaintances when we did meet, which was seldom; and the few words I at any time had the opportunity of exchanging with him were, when he made his periodical calls at the bank to receive a quarterly remittance of fifty pounds, passed to his credit through our London agents. I became more and more interested in this young couple, and on that account regretted to see that Major Tennant was the only person with whom he seemed disposed to associate. I could account for this in no other way than what might arise from a reciprocity of feeling on the subject of military affairs. I was, therefore, truly distressed one day when he called upon me at the bank with a bill of exchange for three hundred pounds for discount, drawn on Major Tennant. I knew at once that it was an accommodation for the latter. I invited him into my back room, and told him I would cash the bill; but, in as delicate a manner as I could possibly express myself, asked him if he were aware of Major Tennant's circumstances, and mildly put him upon his guard against increasing such transactions, offering, as my apology, my experience of the frequent distress and trouble I had seen arise from them. He did not seem at

the time much to relish my gratuitous counsels ; so he received the cash, and the business was so far finished. I wish it had ended then.

Four months had elapsed after this transaction, when, on coming to town one afternoon, I was much surprised in passing through the outer office, to notice that several articles had been placed there—I was told for safety. They consisted of a handsome and costly Chinese cabinet, portraits of a lady and a child, a little Irish harp, with many valuables in books, &c. At such a very unusual proceeding I was much annoyed ; but on learning from the bank's solicitor, who came in at the moment, that they were a portion of goods taken in execution that day from the residence of Captain Fitzmorris, on account of his unpaid draft upon Major Tennant, I was shocked beyond expression—vexation was far too mild a word for my feelings. I was galled to the soul—and almost felt for a time as if I had been seized with an incipient fit of apoplexy.

What was to be done ? What course was I to pursue to make amends for this outrage ? I was not long in deciding. I ordered all the articles to be returned without a moment's loss of time, and skilful persons to be sent with the conveyance, to replace them without delay or damage ; whilst I in the mean time drove down to the cottage. I found it all in darkness—a dense cloud seemed to hang over it. The servant who answered the door, hesitatingly said that his master was at home, but engaged. I, however, sent in my name, and was admitted. On entering the room, my heart sank within me on witnessing the appearance of destruction and desolation of which I had been the innocent cause. Captain Fitzmorris, on hearing my voice, had risen to his feet, and I found him standing with his back to the fire, attired in his dressing-gown, slippers, and smoking-cap ; and at the extreme end of the room, attempting to put her little boy to sleep, sat his wife, one of the most enchanting creatures I ever cast eyes upon. Her face was one of those with which you are immediately entranced ; and as she stooped over her babe, with her long dark ringlets resting on his bosom, I was impressed with the feeling that I was unworthy, after the occurrence of the day, to breathe the same atmosphere with such an angel of innocence and light. It was not the graces of that heavenly face, the softness and

perfection of feature, the magic lip and cheek, and that winning smile, that fascinated me (all of which combined formed the exquisite beauty); but it was the sweetness of subdued anguish, the tender and unrepining appearance of fortitude, that gave an expression to the countenance that struck at once to the heart and captivated the soul.

Fitzmorris received me with the most dignified but almost repulsive hauteur. He inquired to what circumstance he was indebted for the honour of my visit?

I replied—"Captain Fitzmorris, a very unpleasant affair, I have just been informed, has occurred to-day, in the usual course of banking-business, and I called to say"—

"Oh, sir!" he said sharply, interrupting me, "you need not trouble yourself; what is done, I suppose, cannot now be undone, and the less that is said about the matter the better."

"But, my dear sir," I exclaimed, "do allow me to explain, as you cannot be aware of the circumstances which have led to this very unfortunate casualty."

"No excuse you can offer," he replied, "can at all palliate the step you have thought proper to take, knowing my ignorance of business, without at all events previously warning me of what I had to expect at your hands; not that I in the least regard my own feelings, but those of others."

Mrs. Fitzmorris, who had during this conversation been weeping bitterly, now interposed; and, addressing her husband, said—"Dear Charles, *do* ask the gentleman to be seated."

"Oh, yes!" said the captain with a sarcastic smile, "if there is a chair left for him."

I was now determined to draw this painful interview to a close, and addressing him with firmness and candour, I said—"Captain Fitzmorris, I entreat that you will listen to me with calmness, and believe me that this untoward event has taken place without my knowledge or consent; had I been at home, nothing would have induced me to have permitted it, and there is no circumstance that has ever occurred in our business that has given me more real distress than this. I know it will be difficult to obliterate the impression of such a proceeding; but let me assure you that the honest object of my visit is to offer you the most ample apology for this sad affair, and to make every reparation for it in my power.

Will Mrs. Fitzmorris," I said, "therefore" (addressing her), "venture to trust her husband to town with me for a short time, when she may depend upon my returning with him in safety, and in better spirits?" Mrs. Fitzmorris, with one of her sweetest smiles, at this remark, threw her arms around her husband's neck, and exclaimed—

"Oh, yes! dearest Charles, *do* go with Mr. G——, and tell him all our present anxieties. You know I always told you that we should find friends when we least expected it."

Fitzmorris now turned to me, evidently somewhat excited, and said—"Mr. G——, you have taken me by surprise by this generous conduct, for which I was unprepared, and it is my part now to apologise for my very rude and abrupt reception of you. I will with pleasure accompany you to town, as you request." And, whilst he changed his dress, I took the opportunity of whispering to Mrs. Fitzmorris that the furniture would be sent back to her immediately, with persons to replace it according to her instructions; and, ere her husband and I returned to the cottage, I would also send my servant with a few directions, which she would have the kindness to allow him to put in execution.

I found I had made considerable progress in securing the confidence of Captain Fitzmorris; and, when seated in the carriage, he began to relate to me the particulars of his transactions with Major Tennant—and I regretted much, when I had my fears confirmed, that they were to a considerable extent—and he then mentioned how much he had blamed himself in not following my advice. I did not at this time press for further particulars. Whilst conversing, I noticed the van with the furniture passing us on the road.

When we reached town, our business was not long in being arranged—the bill renewed, &c. ; after which I walked across the street to our principal hotel, and requested that one of their best dinners for four should be sent down to the cottage, with a few bottles of their prime old wine; and desiring Perkins, my servant, also to go down and see it placed on the table in his own way, and to serve it immediately on our arrival.

Having finished my correspondence, which occupied me fully an hour, I said to Fitzmorris, that as I had brought him to town, I must now keep faith with his lady, and take him safely back to her; and, whilst on the way, he expressed

with much feeling and gratitude the obligation he had brought himself under to me, and promised to let me have a complete statement of his affairs on the following day, which I engaged, if possible, to arrange for him.

As we neared the cottage, the extra glare of light through the blinds struck him as peculiar, and he quietly remarked—"Madame, I think, now appears to come out rather brightly in her troubles;" and when we were shown in by my servant, I shall never forget Fitzmorris's wild stare of astonishment at the change which had taken place since our departure. The scene in Aladdin could not have appeared more marvelous and extraordinary than the one which now presented itself to him. When he left, all was gloom, desolation, and darkness; now that picture was succeeded by all that was charming and bright. Everything was again in apple-pie order; little Charlie had been awakened from his sleep by the noise of arranging the furniture, and both Mrs. Fitzmorris and he appeared in full dress for dinner, which Perkins, with his usual punctuality, placed immediately on the table; and I am sure a more happy group, to judge from the expressions of the different countenances, never encircled a social board. It chanced to be Charlie's birthday, which his father had overlooked, but which the fond mother had well noted, and a bumper was devoted to his health, with the observation—and a deep sigh from his mother—"How much grandpapa would have thought of him!" And he was allowed to remain up an hour later than usual, when his little innocent chatter tended to mellow down, if not altogether obliterate, any unpleasant feeling that might have arisen from the morning's incident. I remained with this interesting and fascinating young couple until past midnight, when we parted with regret, but with the arrangement that they were very soon to visit and become friends with my family.

No allusion having been made in the least to solve the mystery attached to their history, I rested satisfied that, as our confidence and intimacy increased, I should doubtless ere long learn it from them; mean time, I determined to render them all the assistance, which they seemed to require, that lay in my power. On going into Captain Fitzmorris's affairs with him on the following morning, I found that Tennant had got him into a sad mess. I impressed upon him the necessity of concealing nothing from me, for, so far as the

malady appeared desperate, the physician, to effect a cure, must be made fully aware of all the symptoms. He upon this became very candid, and I learned from him that his name was on current paper, for the accommodation of Major Tennant, to the amount of many thousands, and, as he had no *personal* debts, he informed me that he never dreamt that these acceptances would ever trouble him, Major Tennant having invariably assured him that they would all be regularly provided for when due. Such I knew was preposterous; I therefore sent for Tennant, and, after a long and troublesome negotiation, I agreed to renew all the notes that Captain Fitzmorris's name was upon, when due, provided in the interim I received other satisfactory security. This I was fortunate enough to get arranged, and, although years elapsed ere those bills were altogether cleared away, still I sustained no loss, nor can I say I ever did in any similar transactions, where my object was to afford relief to the deserving, in their sufferings from misfortune and embarrassments. After this most singular introduction, Captain Fitzmorris and his lady became our constant visitors, frequently remaining with us for weeks in succession—he to enjoy the following of my game, of which I had an abundant supply, and she the society of my wife and daughters, to whom she became much attached. They still, however, continued to retain their incognito, until one night, when we were left alone after supper, he related to me the principal antecedents of his brief but interesting career, prefacing it with expressions of regret at not having had it in his power to do so sooner, which must have appeared to me disingenuous, and perhaps evincing a want of gratitude for all my kindness to him, which was far from his heart.

"I am the second son," he said, "of the Marquis of T——, and ere this, I daresay, you have suspected that I have sojourned here from prudent motives, under a feigned name. My father and I (who was always considered his favourite son) have been, in consequence of my marriage, estranged for upwards of five years, which alienation, but for a vindictive feeling on the part of my brother, Lord B——, to whom I have no resemblance in any way, might have been at all events ameliorated. What his reason for it can be, I never could understand, for we never had a quarrel, although our tempers, habits, and dispositions were such, that that inter-

change of confidence and affection which ought to have existed between two only brothers, never was apparent, and was a matter of much regret to all those who had any interest in us. He seems to have imbibed an absurd feeling of jealousy towards me, without any cause whatever that I am aware of, unless it proceeds from the knowledge that I am more esteemed than he is by all our connections. I have only lately learned that at present he is using all the power he possesses, to influence my father against my dearest Clara and myself; but you shall hear my story, and then be able the better to judge and advise with me.

CHAPTER II.—EARLY AFFECTIONS.

"At an early period a commission was obtained for me in the Guards, and from my father's intimacy with the commander-in-chief, I had frequent leave of absence, which, at my mother's request, was mostly spent at T—— Priory, her favourite residence, where she passed the greatest portion of the year; and, having been long in a delicate state of health, her visitors were almost confined—with but one or two exceptions—to the clergyman of the parish, Mr. Power, and her physician.

"The only daughter of Mr. Power had been nearly brought up, and principally educated, by my dear mother, and was her affectionate and devoted companion for years; and she never seemed so happy as when we were both using our endeavours to amuse her. My periodical visits to the Priory became more and more frequent, and my solicitude for my mother's health was beginning to be, perhaps, not the *sole* attraction; as I always looked forward, with no little pleasure, to the lone evenings, when Clara Power and I were engaged (a thing of frequent occurrence with us) in a game at chess, while my dear mother was enjoying her afternoon's nap. Clara had been the companion of my childhood, and our mornings were spent in visiting those scenes, which at every step recalled to our remembrance the days of innocence and peace. Was it therefore to be wondered that that warm affection, which had ever existed between us, should have increased with our years and constant intercourse?

"I had returned to town and rejoined my regiment, when we were all summoned suddenly to attend the deathbed of my much loved mother. My father and brother, whose parliamentary duties had prevented them from visiting the Priory for months, were much shocked at this event. I found Clara, from extreme fatigue and want of rest, in a state of much exhaustion. The physician informed us that she had not left the marchioness for one moment, night or day, during her illness, nor would she be prevailed upon to take that rest and nourishment necessary for a young person under such circumstances. My beloved mother expired in her arms, and the last words she uttered were—'Protect this young creature for my sake.'

"Immediately after the funeral we all returned to Grosvenor Square; and my father insisted upon Clara accompanying us, thinking that a change of air and scene would re-establish her health, which had been much impaired from her incessant and unwearied attendance in a sick chamber.

"We now became constant companions, and a mutual feeling of tenderness, unconscious to each other, increased upon us daily. At this time I received, from his royal highness the commander-in-chief, the appointment of *aide-de-camp* to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, and was ordered off immediately to Dublin.

"On the morning fixed for my departure, and whilst the carriage waited at the door that was to convey me from town, I stepped into the saloon, which had been my dear mother's favourite apartment, to take a last look of her portrait, when to my surprise I found Clara reclining on a couch, in a state of much excitement and exhaustion, and absorbed in grief—she had been weeping bitterly. I at once divined the cause. I was in a moment unmanned; no power could have interrupted the outpourings of my feelings. I seized her in my arms—pressed her to my heart—her head fell upon my bosom—she sobbed aloud—we mingled our tears together—and from that moment our fates were united *for ever*; and, although not a word was uttered, our loves were sealed by a language a thousandfold more expressive than human tongue with all its sophistry could have told.

"On my reaching Dublin, I immediately wrote to my father, and frankly informed him of my attachment to my dearest Clara. The reply which I received (a part of which

was the evident dictation of my brother) was far from encouraging; he told me that, if I indulged in such a mad passion, he would for ever withdraw his countenance from me; that what he had in view for my future settlement in life *must not* be baulked by any youthful folly; and that my disregard of his commands would bring upon me not only his indignation, but that he would cast me off for ever, as unworthy of his family or name. I followed this letter up by a strong appeal to his feelings, and a remonstrance as to his being biassed in his better judgment by my brother, which letter remains unanswered to this day. My now betrothed Clara, with whom I had been in constant correspondence, wrote me that the marquis had suggested the propriety of her returning to the parsonage. I met her by appointment on the road, and prevailed on her to come with me to Dublin, and there we were married by my dear mother's old and tried friend, the Dean of C—.

"When this intelligence reached my father, his wrath for the time knew no bounds; he wrote to his friend, the lord-lieutenant, to give me now no favour, as he had cast me off.

"In this state of things, I felt my position so uncomfortable, that I resigned my appointment, sold my commission, and was on my way from Ireland with my wife, to—I neither cared or knew where; when I stopped for a few days at your sweet town, was pleased with the country around, and saw the unoccupied cottage, where we determined to live in seclusion, at least for a time, upon a small annuity which I inherited from my mother. Instead of months, I have now, as you know, remained for years; but, I fear, I must at last bid adieu to those scenes which have afforded me so much pleasure, and the leaving which, I am sure, will be equally felt by my dear Clara, who has become so much attached to the different branches of your family; and the physician tells me that an immediate change of air and scene is necessary towards the recovery of her health, which has never been strong since the birth of her little girl."

Having finished this little narrative, I inquired of Captain Fitzmorris when he had heard of his family?

"Well," he replied, "I have only one correspondent in my cousin, Lord Edward T—, who alone knows my address. I heard from him yesterday, and he writes me that my father, who never mentions my name, is in indifferent health,

and has in a great measure retired from public life ; that he believes my brother, who spends his time amongst blacklegs on the turf during the day, and his nights at the gaming-table, affords my father little comfort ; when they *do* meet, it is for the former to give vent to all the invectives in his power against myself, who never knowingly injured him."

I then said—"Now, Captain Fitzmorris, what are your plans?"

He hesitatingly replied—"You know, I am becoming daily more anxious about my dear wife's state of health ; and, if I had the means requisite, I should lose no time in removing her and the children for a month or two to the continent. But, go where I may, I shall ever carry with me the remembrance of your friendship, and the hospitality of your family."

I told him I quite approved of his arrangements, and not to allow the want of funds to impede his carrying them out, as I would give instructions that his drafts should be honoured to any amount that his necessities might require ; upon which he started to his feet, wrung both my hands, gave me an unutterable look, and we parted for the night.

In the morning, Fitzmorris informed me that, on consulting with his wife, they had settled upon Nice as their destination ; for which place they started the following week, leaving the cottage and its contents in my keeping.

Very shortly after the departure of our dear young friends, I had occasion to be in London, and when there I determined to see the Marquis of T—— on the subject of this amiable and high-spirited youth, whom he had so unjustly discarded. I therefore wrote a respectful note, requesting an interview on the following day, and informing him my object. On reaching Grosvenor Square, I was at once shewn into the library, where the marquis received me with that blending of dignity and condescension, the peculiar and natural gift of the nobleman and courtier.

He began the conversation by inquiring of me when I had seen his unfortunate son.

I replied—"Not unfortunate, my lord, in any respect, excepting from the circumstance of having incurred your lordship's displeasure, which he much deplores."

"From the connection he has formed, he has disgraced his family," he replied.

"Pardon me, my lord," I said, "if any disgrace exists, it is with those who would pollute your lordship's ears with representations that are as wicked as they are unfounded; your son's wife is one of the most innocent, amiable, and accomplished of creatures, and of an alliance with whom the proudest family in the land might be vain."

"She has displayed no amiability of character in marrying my son contrary to my consent, when she must have been aware that such a step would give me the greatest distress."

"I must again differ from you, my lord," I replied; "as she evinced no proofs of want of feeling, when she devoted her young life, by her solicitude, by unremitting and affectionate endeavours, in contributing to the happiness and comfort of your much lamented lady, even to the last moment of her life."

These remarks seemed to touch his heart, and, after a pause of some minutes, he observed—

"I believe he has some family?"

"Yes," I replied, "a boy and girl; the former, who bears your lordship's name, is as noble a little fellow as ever saw the light."

"Well, well," he said, "my engagements preclude the possibility of my extending this interview longer. Does my son require pecuniary aid?"

"No, my lord," I replied, "he has made friends wherever he has gone; and from strangers, unsolicited, he has always been supplied with sufficient to satisfy his very moderate wants."

"Where does he now reside?"

"He is at present at Nice," I replied, "for the benefit of his own health and that of his wife."

"I have to thank you, Mr. G——," he hurriedly said, "for this kind and disinterested visit; tell Charles to write to me;" and, wishing me a good-morning, he rang the bell, and bowed me out in the same stately manner he had received me. Captain Fitzmorris and his family (for I will still call him so), had not been at Nice more than ten days, when they received intelligence which compelled their immediate return to England; one reason was, my report of my interview with the marquis, and the other, the unexpected death of Lord B——, who was killed by a fall from his horse whilst hunting.

Immediately on his arrival in London, Captain Fitzmorris, now Lord B——, had a long interview with his father, when a full reconciliation took place. The latter made a handsome settlement in his favour, and entreated that they should all reside at Grosvenor Square, that he might enjoy, in his declining years, the society of those who were nearest and dearest to him ; his health had long been in a declining state, and in a few years he also was called to his fathers.

It was a proud day to me when I saw my young friend, who had been so tempered in the furnace of adversity, raised to that high station he so well merited ; and never did a coronet encircle a brow so worthy of its honours, or the wearer support its dignity with greater grace, manliness, or nobility of soul.

The young marchioness, on being introduced at court, was regarded as one of its brightest ornaments, and was received with the marked favour and distinction of her sovereign ; but she still shines most when the heart and affections are called into play, and at the head of her domestic circle, supported as she now is by numerous olive branches.

My little friend Charlie is now my tall and handsome friend, Cornet Lord B—— of the — Hussars ; his father has purchased the sweet spot where they spent so many happy days, with a field or two, which serves as a shooting-box when they join me on the twelfth of August.

When resident in London, I spend much of my time at Grosvenor Square, and never fail to be present on the occasions of birthdays, &c., &c. ; and often whilst there, gazing on the splendour that surrounds me, my mind will revert in contrast to the little cottage on the banks of the lake, and to that joyous night when our friendship commenced, which has since continued, and remained now for a long term of years, uninterrupted and unimpaired.

The Highland Fair.

CHAPTER I.—THE OLD CHIEFTAIN'S CASTLE.

FOR a period extending over nearly twenty years, our house had been in constant correspondence with the firm of "Warner, Wells, & Co.," of Great St. Helens, London. They were extensive East India and general colonial merchants, and kept a number of travellers, one of whom used usually once a quarter to visit the towns in our neighbourhood, where they had for years done a good and profitable business in the different descriptions of produce they imported. They had always a large account with our bank, which they drew against by valuing upon us through our London agents. Their system and mode of settlement with their customers, was by bills at three months, payable at our office, or two and a half discount for cash, if settled within eight days after delivery of the goods. It often happened, however, that we were under heavy advance for them, in consequence of their customers' bills being frequently dishonoured, or accounts unpaid; in which case we, at the end of every six months (when we balanced), drew upon them *at sight* for the amount at their debit, with interest and commission.

The most perfect confidence existed between us. We were quite cognizant of the nature of each other's business, resources, connection, &c., and our correspondence was mutually beneficial, inasmuch as we found *their* firm often useful when we had occasion to pass small drafts on London, and *they* found ours equally so, by drawing upon us when they required to make up a sum to meet any unexpected demand upon them. The principal of the firm, Mr. Richard Warner, and I, were very old personal friends. He had, shortly before the commencement of our acquaintance, succeeded his father in the business; he was a man for whom I had the greatest

regard and esteem, and my opinion of him remained unchanged, and my business confidence in him the same, when I knew him to be overwhelmed with difficulties. It is a virtue which should determine us in the choice of our friends, without inquiring into their good or ill fortune ; and when we find in ourselves resolution enough to follow them in adversity, *then* may we boldly, and with an honest freedom, cultivate their friendship in their greatest prosperity.

In all that concerned, therefore, our private affairs, Mr. Warner and I were constantly in the habit of consulting each other. He had an amiable disposition, was much respected and beloved in all his public and social intercourse, and no name stood higher upon "Change," as a man of honour and integrity, than that of Richard Warner. Although by no means an over-ambitious man, still, from circumstances unavoidable, the house of "Warner, Wells, & Co." was led into the purchase of an extensive indigo plantation in India, which, when I was informed of it, gave me some uneasiness, as I knew its management would involve a very considerable amount of additional capital ; and the communications being distant, I feared that the superintending of the estate in the hands of persons with whom they were comparatively little acquainted, would be the cause of much additional anxiety to my friend. However, in talking over the matter with him, he mentioned that it was their intention in the following year to send out one of their junior partners to superintend the management of the property, and perhaps he might be induced to pay it a visit himself, confident that it would eventually realize immense wealth. I had my misgivings as to all this ; but knowing that Mr. Warner was not a man to be carried away by any speculative phantom or delusion, I contented myself in the belief that things would turn out as represented, particularly as the house had entered into a very beneficial contract with the East India Company for a term of years.

At this time Mr. Warner paid me a visit, and I induced him (in the promise to use all the influence I possessed in his favour) to come forward as a candidate to represent our boroughs in parliament. He was opposed by a scion of a noble Whig family in the county ; and, although late in coming into the field, was returned by a considerable majority. This gave a character and status to the house ;

besides, the circumstance of Mr. Warner being appointed at the same time a director of the Bank of England, established its reputation as one of the first commercial firms in the world. The accounts they received from India, as to the produce of their newly-acquired property, was most encouraging, the year having proved a most favourable one; and the first shipment, both in quantity and quality, surpassed all their expectations. The mark of Warner, Wells, & Co.'s indigo having established its character, commanded the preference over all others in the market. The house continued to prosper, and its connections increase; its different ramifications now extending to every quarter of the globe. Mr. Warner was indefatigable in his attention to business; and in all mercantile matters under discussion by the legislature, he was looked upon as high authority, his opinions heard with great respect and attention, and his (solicited) private advice frequently acted upon by ministers. Mr. Perry, one of the junior partners of the house, was selected to proceed to India, and take the management of the plantation under his charge. He sailed in one of their largest ships, taking under his charge a valuable cargo of miscellaneous goods for the Calcutta market. The fleet of merchantmen with their convoy had not, however, well got out of the channel when they encountered a French squadron, and, after a short but decisive engagement, the ships were captured, and all on board taken prisoners. Warner, Wells, & Co., being their own underwriters, the loss upon them fell heavily. This was a commencement of a series of misfortunes which happened to the house; and at this period, had Mr. Warner acted upon my advice, he would, whilst yet in the very prime of life, have retired from business, and devoted his attention to his parliamentary duties. To a certain extent he had made up his mind, I imagined, to do so; as I was aware he had been for some weeks purchasing largely in the funds, in anticipation of their rise, of which I knew he had always the most secret and correct information, and which at the time were at a very low figure.

The next accounts from India were not so favourable; the crops had both been very deficient and of inferior quality. To this disappointment was added the failure of one of their principal correspondents in New York, with whom the house was deeply involved; and West India produce, of which

they were large holders, had unexpectedly fallen upwards of twenty-five per cent. All these casualties, with their own heavy engagements coming round, made them look forward with fear and trembling. The house had an amount of property on hand more than sufficient to pay all their debts, but which, from the state of the market, could not be realized or turned into money; besides, several cargoes were on their way home, the sale of which alone would nearly doubly cover all the immediate claims upon them. However, when pecuniary engagements are in perspective, time flies over marvellously quick, and within ten days a large amount of engagements became payable; and we, unfortunately amongst the rest, at this period had a heavy claim against the house. I received a private and confidential letter from Mr. Warner, informing me of the very awful position in which the house was placed, and that they were all nearly paralyzed; he talked of their almost having made up their minds to suspend payments, and entreated me to give him my best advice what course I thought he should pursue. I wrote him in reply by no means to think of suspending payment, let the consequences be what they might, having such an amount of real property on hand, until every other effort had failed to avert such a dreadful alternative; and I suggested that temporary assistance might be obtained, so as to enable them to stem the storm, until their property could be converted without a sacrifice. I also reminded Mr. Warner that he had often told me he had an uncle, a rich old Highland laird, and he, I thought, might perhaps be prevailed upon to render the necessary assistance to bolster up the house for a few weeks, until their property could be prudently disposed of.

Instead of a reply to this letter, Mr. Warner one day made his appearance himself; and, after a long conversation, in which I *entreated him* almost on my knees to avoid exposure, I was at last so fortunate as to convince him that any course he could in honour pursue, was better than acknowledging to the world that the house was unable to meet its engagements; he had no idea, he said, or hopes of assistance from his uncle, who, from some family misunderstanding, had never been on good terms with his father, and who he had never seen, although he was informed he had been much attached to his mother; but we agreed that it could do no

harm to give him a trial, and the following morning Mr. Warner started with a heavy heart on an expedition, the results from which he thought boded little good. Mr. M'Kernell's estate was situated somewhere about twenty miles to the north of Inverness, the access to which was very difficult, and at some seasons of the year it was almost unapproachable. It embraced a large tract of country, principally sheep pasture, which he had kept for a long term of years in his own hands, and from which it was said he had realized a large fortune, as, being a bachelor, he had lived (although a very hospitable man) at comparatively little expense. The night was pretty far advanced ere Mr. Warner, in a crazy old postchaise, reached "Castle Craig," the abode of his maternal uncle, whose habits, excepting when he had friends with him, were regular, in his retiring early to rest, whilst the rising sun, the whole year through, found him on the mountain-tops.

Such an unusual occurrence, therefore, as the arrival of a visitor at *any* time, but more particularly at such an hour, created quite a tumult over the whole live stock of the place; about a dozen shepherds' dogs commenced yelping, geese cackling, and it would appear as if all the poultry of the country round had congregated together, from their tumultuous and incessant noise.

When the post-boy had repeated his summons at the gate with the old fashioned knocker several times, it was at last (after some whispering conversation had been heard within) opened by an antiquated dame, who accosted Mr. Warner with, "What's your wull, sir?"

"I want to see Mr. M'Kerrell," he replied; "be so kind as to inform him that his nephew, Mr. Warner, from London, will be glad to have that pleasure."

"Gude guide us!" she whispered aside to herself, and hurriedly disappeared, leaving him to stand in the hall for nearly ten minutes ere he was admitted, during which time he heard a good deal of whispering, and dusting, and brushing going on in the adjoining room. This delay in his reception afforded him an opportunity to take a glance around, and, by the sickening light of a glimmering lamp, he could perceive that the place had all the bearings of an old baronial residence; on the walls were hung falchions, halberts, bucklers, and other implements of war, with various trophies of

the chase, interspersed with several old pictures, all of which seemed to be shrouded in dust, and in a sad state of dilapidation ; but what most attracted his attention was an exquisite group in marble, the size of life, of Diana and her hounds starting for the chase, with her quiver slung behind, and her bow so fashioned as (if necessary) to form candelabras. He was engaged in admiration of this enchanting statue, when the old lady returned and requested him to follow her, when she piloted him into an ancient room surrounded with shelves, which contained a large collection of old *tomes*, and for the first time was introduced to his venerable relative. He was a person apparently upwards of seventy years of age, very tall, and wonderfully erect for his time of life ; his hair was long, and as white as the driven snow. He wore a snuff-brown coloured coat, with large silver-plated buttons, a waistcoat and breeches of the tartan of his clan, with a pair of long boot hose, which reached half-way up his thighs ; he had fine full grey eyes, expressing benevolence and intelligence ; his colour was florid, and gave the idea of his having been accustomed to exposure to all weathers ; his whole appearance would indicate a man of good and determined judgment, great moral, and at one time physical strength. His general bearing was that of a proud old chieftain, who had always been accustomed to command, and be immediately obeyed. Mr. Warner's first impression of him was rather unfavourable ; this, however, was lost when they got into conversation.

"Well," he said "Richard, you have found your way to your old uncle at last ; I have long expected, at all events, to have heard from you, knowing, as you must have done, that I was stricken in years, and without any near relative but yourself likely to succeed me on this poor place, and with whom I could properly consult as to the management and improvement of such a large extent of property. I have already done much for it, and, if I am spared, hope to do much more ; my life has been devoted to turning the land, poor as it is, to account, and (as you will judge) I have not been unsuccessful.

"I have frequently heard of you as being one who stood high with his fellow-men, which, on your mother's account, who was one of the best of women, made me proud, and gave me much gratification ; knowing well that all your good

qualities were inherited from her, your father being a man with whom I could never herd—all his habits, associates, and inclinations being totally at variance with every thing that I had ever been accustomed to, and his ungovernable temper was such that no one could ever live in peace with him beyond a limited time. Had your mother not been an angel, she could not so long have borne with him as she did."

"My father and mother, sir, you are aware, both died when I was almost in infancy," said Mr. Warner, "and, whatever the faults of the former may have been, he is now gone to his long account. I scarcely remember him, but the slight recollection I *do* retain, has given me the impression that to me he was always tender and affectionate; under any circumstances, it is repugnant to the feelings of a son to be compelled to listen to the *ex parte* details of the faults and weaknesses of one's own parent, whose memory we are bound to revere. You will therefore excuse me if I request that we may leave the dead to rest in their tombs, and adopt the more pleasant theme of discussing the merits of the living."

"You are right, my boy," said Mr. M'Kerrell, "and I honour and think the more of you for standing up in defence of the character of the father that begat you." Mr. Warner now congratulated himself on having at last made the acquaintance of his uncle, informing him that he certainly would have done so many years sooner, had he not been apprehensive of a dubious reception, from the knowledge he had of the continued enmity that had so long existed between his uncle and his late father. He apologised for having intruded upon him at such a late hour, but gave as a reason the badness, and his ignorance of the roads, which had detained him fully an hour beyond the time he had expected to arrive, when he hoped to have had the pleasure of joining him at dinner.

"Dinner!" said Mr. M'Kerrell, "why, we dine in this wild country at one o'clock, and sometimes think *that* hour late enough, when we breakfast at seven; however, you are just in time for supper, which is often our principal meal, as it does not interfere with business;" upon which he rang the bell, and the old dame again appeared. "Meenie," he said, "let us have supper without loss of time;" and it was very soon served in the room we occupied. It consisted of cold corned beef, ham and eggs, ewe-milk cheese, kippered salmon, with a large plate of oatmeal porridge, and a basin of

milk. Having finished supper, which Mr. Warner, from having tasted nothing since morning, particularly enjoyed, Meenie again made her appearance with the drinking materials, consisting of wine, brandy, a bottle of real mountain dew, with lemons, &c.

"Now," said Mr. M'Kerrell, "you shall partake of a treat that few can boast of, or offer you, and which I never produce excepting on such occasions as the present—a portion of the same whisky of which 'the Prince' partook, and drank to the health of your grandfather; puir fellow, he had muckle need of both refreshment and rest, as he had been wandering about the hills for many weeks, hunted like a wild beast, and hiding at nights in any hole where he could get a morsel of sleep in peace. However, it's all past now," he said with a sigh; "and he and those who persecuted him, have met face to face long ago in the presence of HIM who knows all the secrets of the human heart, and to whom we must account for all our deeds done in this wicked world, be they good or be they evil. But come, now," he said, "we must not dwell too long on a subject which is fraught with so many heart-rending associations; help yourself, and pass the bottle; such stuff, you will confess, you don't meet with every day—there's not a headache in a hogshead of it."

Having charged their glasses, the old man reverted to the subject of their family history, and requested that Mr. Warner would give him an account of his own career, which was so honourable to him. This was exactly what he wanted, as it afforded him the opportunity of opening the subject which had been the object of his journey. Mr. M'Kerrell listened to him during all the details of his past life with much attention, and when he came to give an account of the difficulties under which his house had been labouring for want of temporary assistance, he did not seem taken by surprise, but simply remarked—

"Well, Richard, I must not look on and see you affronted, if I have the means of preventing it. I will examine into my matters, and inform you in a day or two how we can best manage it."

Mr. Warner told him that there was not a moment to spare, as he must be aware of the paramount necessity of his immediate return to London; and that any arrangements

he could accomplish must be done forthwith, if the credit of the house was to be saved.

"In that case, we must lose no time," he replied, "but endeavour to have it done to-morrow, and you can start on the following morning. You shall have my horses as far as the inn, about seven miles off, where you will get a post-chaise on to Inverness. But I want you particularly to remain with me over to-morrow, as we are to have our great annual sheep-shearing on the mountains, which I would wish you much to see; and, since your arrival, I have also sent to invite a few friends to meet you at dinner."

Meenie (who had up to this period remained in the room adjusting the furniture, books, &c.), when she heard this last observation of the laird's, looked aghast, and appeared in much tribulation, or annoyed, perhaps, that she had not been previously consulted ere the laird had taken such a step upon himself, as by this time it had become abundantly evident to Mr. Warner that Meenie was supreme in all the domestic arrangements of the castle, and appeared upon a footing of equality with Mr. M'Kerrell, inasmuch as she frequently threw in a sage remark in the course of their conversation; on this account it would have been difficult for a stranger to have said what position she held in the establishment, her costume being that of an old maiden lady of some rank, and she might have passed as such, but for a large bunch of keys and a capacious "housewife" which were suspended in front of her. She took an early opportunity of apologizing to Mr. Warner for the untidy state of the house; and remarked that "cleaning day would have been to-morrow, had the laird not asked thae 'unco folk' to their dinner." They continued to discuss all the private news and the politics of the day, in which Meenie, who still remained in the room, interspersed with many rather humorous and questionable observations. In alluding to the threatened war with France, the details and reason for the necessity of which Mr. Warner fully explained to his uncle, Meenie sapiently observed—"that she hoped it would be a *ceevil* war." Upon this the laird somewhat lost his patience, and requested her to cease her nonsense and bring the chamber candles; a hint to abscond, which she perfectly understood. When they were left alone, Mr. M'Kerrell apologized for the liberties that old servants frequently took upon them-

selves. They for some hours continued emptying and replenishing glass after glass, until Mr. Warner, who had not been accustomed to such libations, beginning to feel unequivocal symptoms of incipient intoxication, found it necessary to propose retiring for the night, reminding his uncle of their having to start early for the mountains.

CHAPTER II.—DEER-STALKING—CHIEFTAIN'S BANQUET.

It was a splendid morning, about half an hour before sunrise, when Mr. Warner was aroused from his sleep by Mr. M'Kerrell, who appeared at his bedside, with a bottle and a glass in his hand. "Come, come," he said, "I feared you would not keep time; we must be off, but first let me give you a dram, to keep the morning's cold from your heart." Mr. Warner remonstrated against such a proceeding, but his uncle persisted, and he was afterwards bound to confess that it possessed all the virtues and benefits which he attributed to it long before they reached the mountain-tops; from whence he witnessed, for the first time in his life, the splendour and majesty of a rising sun, and on reaching the shearing-ground the scene became most animated and exciting; there they found a multitude of highlanders, who all joined in a loud and hearty cheer when the laird appeared, whilst the bagpipes struck up an inspiring pibroch. There appeared to be fully two thousand sheep, on which the shearers did their work with marvellous despatch, divesting them of fleece after fleece, and which had accumulated to the height and size of a large haystack ere they left the ground. After they had superintended this extraordinary scene for more than an hour—"Now," said Mr. M'Kerrell, "as we have still time yet before breakfast, I will show you what I have done, and am still doing, in the way of improving;" and as we walked along, and approached within a short distance of the castle, we suddenly came upon at least a hundred men, women, and children, employed pulling up the heather by the roots, digging drains, and covering the surface with lime, ashes, &c., &c. He pointed out an extent of fully a thousand acres that he had "taken in" in this manner, which now appeared fair

arable and pasture land, and which, by this process, was enhanced fully an hundred-fold in value : he said that it was not only the improvement of his estate that he had in view, but that it gave him the power of affording employment to all the inhabitants who felt disposed to work in the village. Mr. Warner was complimenting him on his success and perseverance, when he interrupted him by drawing his attention to the approach of Meenie.

"Yonder comes that awfu' woman," he said ; "if you will believe me, Richard, she is the very plague of my life ; and yet, she has got so much into my ways from long service, that I could not now well get on without her ; she is, if I may use the expression, both my bane and my antidote.

"Well," he said when she reached him, "what is it you want now ? what brings you here to pester us ?"

"Want !" said Meenie, "I cam to tell you that, unless you come hame, you'll be likely to *want* your breakfast ; there's the troots, and the ham, and the eggs, a' nearly cauld."

"We will be home immediately," said Mr. M'Kerrell ; "go away !"

Meenie, however, still lingered on, to his great annoyance ; she seemed to be ruminating on some all-important subject ; at last it got vent by her exclaiming—"Dear me, laird, if you pu' up the heather in that way, what'll become o' a' the puir moorfule ?"

"Let them turn paitricks, and be d—d to them !" replied Mr. M'Kerrell, entirely losing his temper ; "go home with you," he said, "and don't keep bothering us with your abominably absurd questions."

The fine fresh morning air had given them excellent appetites to relish all the tempting viands of which a genuine highland breakfast is composed ; and, whilst enjoying it, Mr. M'Kerrell proposed, as an amusement for the day, that they should visit two romantic waterfalls about four miles off, and also make some calls on some of his neighbours, returning to dinner at five o'clock, at which hour he had invited his friends to meet his nephew.

Having both retired to dress for the excursion, Mr. Warner, on his return to the breakfast-room, found Meenie and the laird engaged in conversation ; he was giving her directions about the dinner, and on several points of its arrangement, he found a decided difference of opinion existed betwixt

them, and in most instances Meenie was triumphant in carrying her point. In one part of his instructions the laird, however, showed a firm determination to have his own way, viz., in the drinking department; and after writing down his directions for Lawson, his old butler (which he requested Meenie to hand him immediately on his return from the sheep-shearing), he concluded in a manner and tone of voice that admitted of no remonstrance.

"Now, woman, you will tell Lawson to fill and place the 'Tappet hen' on the table;" at which Meenie opened her eyes very wide, and gave a groan, with a look of unutterable dismay. In a few minutes, when she had recovered herself, she asked in a tremulous voice whether she should bring out the silver quaichs, and other accompaniments which always attended the use of this old family relic? to which the laird replied, "Certainly, certainly!" Now, this said Tappet hen was a most capacious bottle of a peculiar shape, and never was introduced, excepting like the boar's head at the royal Scotch banquets of old—a signal to put to death (as in the case of Douglas the Grim, by King James at Stirling castle) an invited guest previously doomed—with this difference *only*, that the one plot was to make the poor victim dead in good earnest, and the other *dead drunk*.*

The servant entered to announce that the shelties were at the door; but, before he could be allowed to take his departure, Mr. M'Kerrell had to pass through another ordeal. Meenie had to give him the finishing touch with the clothes-brush; in doing which she pulled up his coat collar, and tugged down his skirts, in a most unseemly and rough manner, to which ceremony he passively submitted; and this was what Meenie called "keeping her credit," by making the laird "douce and fait to appear decent before folk." She disappeared for a minute or two, when she again returned with a bottle and a glass in her hands, for the laird and his freend, as she said, to partake of a stirrup-cup. They now

* During the last and a great portion of the present century, it was the customary practice for gentlemen invariably after dinner to dwell for hours in conversation over their wine, to the absurd, ungallant, and indelicate exclusion of ladies; happily, however, *now*, this unseemly fashion, which tended to demoralize and dissipate the young, often leading to premature senectude, is entirely exploded from all good society, forming one of the greatest improvements in modern times in our social intercourse.

started on their expedition, but had not got far when Meenie again overtook them.

"What do you want now," said Mr. M'Kerrell, "in the name of all that's sacred?"

"I want to ken," she replied, "if I am to put a cawnel in the woman's han' the nicht, and to tell ye that I think thae turkey pouts *wad be the better o' being killed.*"

This first question of Meenie's completely upset Mr. Warner; he could no longer control his risible faculties; he laughed outright; the woman alluded to by Meenie was the splendid figure of Diana in the hall, which he had so much admired the previous evening, and which interrogatory certainly compromised the dignity, and all the fine classical associations, of the goddess of the chase.

"Yea," replied Mr. M'Kerrell, "any thing you please; go away, for God's sake! That woman," he said, "I believe, will be the death of me;" and after a pause, he said, "Well, Richard, I have been thinking about what you spoke of to me last night, and as I know you to be a man of your word, and fully to be depended on in every respect, I have determined to give you the assistance you require, as to which I shall this evening write to my London bankers to honour the drafts of your house, which you had better also advise to this effect. No thanks—that will do," he said, as Mr. Warner endeavoured to address him in terms that such an act of generosity claimed. "I suppose," he continued, "you must leave to-morrow morning; and now that you have found your way, I hope you will not be long ere you again return to see your old uncle. But this is the residence of my young friend the Master of L——," he abruptly said, as they approached the lodges of a very old-fashioned mansion, at which Mr. M'Kerrell seemed quite at home, as, when the servant appeared at the gate, he dismounted from his sheltie, requesting Mr. Warner to do the same, and walked unasked into the house, when they were met in the hall by the "Master," who seized both his hands, and gave him a genuine highland welcome. He was a noble-looking man, about thirty, and dressed in the highland costume of a chieftain. On Mr. Warner being introduced and named to him, he said he had often heard of, and about him from his uncle, and at once received him with much cordiality.

Mr. M'Kerrell now told him that they were so far on

their way to visit the falls, and that he had called to request that he would do him the favour to join them at dinner that evening, to which he at once assented. "But," said he, "after you have seen the falls, I have a proposal to make which may not be unacceptable to Mr. Warner, not being a thing of everyday occurrence. My keeper has just come on with the welcome news, that 'the herd,' in their full strength, have come down from the hills, and are now grazing within a mile of where we stand. He tells me that there is one fine old buck amongst them, with a family of seven, as far as he could count them; so, if Mr. Warner has any wish to witness a sample of deer-stalking, he never could have a better chance." This was, indeed, an unexpected treat to them, and after a few preliminary arrangements (the "Master" having supplied each with a rifle), they all started for the cover, with the intention of visiting the falls on their return.

The gamekeeper had taken the lead with the dogs in couples, and had proceeded little more than a mile, when he stopped short in a moment as if he had been shot, putting his fingers on his lips to indicate silence, and waved his hand downwards; upon which the whole party threw themselves with their faces towards the ground.

"They are all behind yonder crag," said the keeper in a whisper; "under the cover of the hillock. We must, if possible, reach the old thorn you see in the distance ere we make the attempt;" upon which they crawled upon all-fours in the most perfect silence, until they came to the point fixed upon, when they found themselves about fifty yards from the flock, which was now partially visible to all.

"Cock your rifles, gentlemen, if you please," said the keeper, addressing the party in a suppressed tone of voice; "they may spring in a moment—be so kind as take the word from me."

This remark had not well passed his lips when they perceived the antlers of the tallest of the herd appearing above the crag, as if he had from some cause been suddenly roused from his lair.

"They have heard the dogs," said the keeper in the lowest possible whisper. "Down, Jowler—down!" he muttered in alarm and excitement, in which all participated. However, Jowler was not now so easily silenced, having smelt the game; and, after much coaxing and threatening to keep

him quiet, he, with the whole pack, broke out with one terrific bark, and the next moment the entire herd were off at full speed.

"Fire!" cried the keeper at the full pitch of his voice, uncoupling the dogs.

The whole affair was so instantaneous, that the "Master" was the only one of the party that got his rifle to bear.

"A palpable miss," he cried, as he saw the stag making swiftly away.

"I am not so sure of that, 'Master,'" said the keeper; "I saw him stagger when you fired."

"I certainly covered his head," returned the "Master."

"And see," said Mr. M'Kerrell (when the stag had got about two hundred paces off), "how he labours; he is assuredly struck!" and, ere he had well uttered these words, the noble animal reared himself on his hind-legs, gave one summerset, and tumbled prostrate on his back. When the party reached the spot, he was quite dead; the ball had passed between his antlers, through the brain, and out beneath the right eye. When they ascertained this fact, they all spontaneously joined in three cheers, which rung far and wide, and was echoed back from valley to valley.

"This is worth coming to see and experience," said Mr. Warner.

"Nobly done," said Mr. M'Kerrell.

"He is the finest buck we have seen in this glen for two or three years," said the keeper.

He was certainly a noble specimen of the full-grown red-deer, being of immense size and strength.

As there was no chance of obtaining another shot for at least that day, at the "Master's" request the keeper put a small hunting-horn to his lips (which he wore slung behind him), and, having sounded thrice, at least a dozen gillies appeared on the hill-tops, and made all speed for the spot. They immediately mounted the buck upon their shoulders, when a rustic procession was formed of men and dogs, which increased in numbers as it proceeded along the road; the "Master" and his friends leading the way, with his piper in front, who had also by this time joined the party, playing "The Death of the Stag," which was reverberated from the surrounding mountains.

After having partaken of some refreshment at L—— Hall,

Mr. M'Kerrell and Mr. Warner proceeded to see the falls, with which the latter was much gratified; and on their return they were joined by the "Master," who accompanied them to Castle Craig, by the time they reached which it was close upon the dinner-hour.

Mr. Warner, after having rested for some time from the fatigue and excitement of the day, and dressed for dinner, was ushered into the banqueting-hall: it was a long, spacious, wainscoted apartment, in which was blazing a large log-fire, having a very curious mosaic floor, and the roof singularly supported and ornamented with gilded tessellated work; the walls were hung with old family pictures, and all the panellings bore the arms, or crest and motto, of the different ancestors and connections of the family. Many old-fashioned warlike instruments also adorned the walls. The table extended to nearly the full length of the hall, and was divided in the centre; the upper portion of it, which was raised about two feet higher than the lower, was occupied by the laird's immediate friends, whilst the lower portion, separated by a barrier of dishes, salt-cellars, &c., was set apart for the retainers of the clan, and dependants upon the estate. The laird's chair was placed upon a dais slightly elevated, and behind him, affixed to the wall immediately above it, was a large head and antlers of a red deer, with two naked claymores crossed under it.

When Mr. Warner entered this imposing hall, he found the guests assembled, to each of whom he was formally introduced by his uncle. They were all dressed in the full highland costume, as chieftains, and seemed to be on intimate terms with each other.

A number of servants, attired in the kilt and philabeg, now made their appearance with dinner, and formed a sort of procession, headed by Lawson, the butler, dressed in an old-fashioned livery, who appeared to be the seneschal of the place.

At the top of the table was placed a magnificent salmon, just taken from the stream, and boiled *in toto*; at the other end appeared a large baron of beef; whilst a roasted haunch of venison, and other game, consisting of blackcock, ptarmigan, grouse, wild-ducks, &c., &c., graced the other parts of the table; in the centre of the principal one stood claret-

bottles, wine-decanter and glasses, &c. ; and on a silver pedestal, towering above every thing else, appeared in all its majesty the "Tappet hen." A shield, suspended at the extreme end of the hall, and which sounded like a gong, was now struck by one of the servants—the signal for all to take their seats. Behind each guest at the upper table stood a gillie, or henchman, to wait upon his master. Silence being called by the laird, grace was asked from the lower table by a sort of chaplain or schoolmaster ; after which, all in good earnest began to use their knives and forks with evident gusto on the different tempting dishes before them, whilst the piper played an enlivening martial air.

The scene altogether struck Mr. Warner with wonder ; bringing vividly before him what he had read and heard of the manners and habits of the olden feudal times. Every justice having been done to the viands, they now proceeded to perhaps as important a consideration—that of passing the wine. This was continued for an hour or two, when, at the general request, a large punch-bowl was introduced, and the "Tappet hen" brought into requisition. Some loyal toasts were given, but more dark and disloyal allusions were made, and songs were sung which elicited much applause ; at the same time, as the evening advanced, many undisguised Jacobite sentiments were proposed and received with loud hurrahs ; all rising, and standing with one foot on the chair, and the other on the table.

When Mr. Warner had seen the fourth bowl charged and emptied, and feeling the effects of his participation in the discussion of the former ones, he made an excuse, of having to leave early in the morning, to retire, and thankful he was when he reached his bed-chamber. He had fallen into and enjoyed a dead sleep for an hour or two, when he was awoke by a clamour of voices singing the old inspiring song—

" In the garb of old Gaul, with the fire of old Rome,
From the heath-cover'd mountains of Scotia we come :"—

and at the conclusion of which, the morning being now far advanced, the company appeared to break up and disperse, making considerable noise ere they reached and got seated on their horses, and in their different conveyances ; upon which

Mr. Warner again sunk into a sweet slumber, nor did he awake until the hour arrived when he was to take his departure, and when, to his astonishment, Mr. M'Kerrell appeared, seemingly *quite fresh*, at his bedside, to arouse him.

"Not being used to our rough style of living," he said, "I scarcely thought you would have been able to get up at the hour you fixed; and, knowing the necessity of your making the best use of your time, I have come to make sure work of it. You will get an excellent breakfast at the village, which I have sent word for them to prepare for you; but, at Meenie's suggestion, a bowl of new milk, with a spark in it from the "Lappet hen," she recommends you to take before starting, for the stomach's sake."

Mr. Warner affectionately and sincerely thanked his good old uncle for all his kindness and hospitality, and having complied with Meenie's wishes, which he afterwards found not only grateful in keeping down the symptoms of a nervous tendency, arising from the debauch of the previous night, but necessary as a bulwark to protect the stomach against the effects of the keen morning mountain air, he embraced and bade adieu to the good old man.

"Farewell, Richard," said Mr. M'Kerrell; "your visit has cheered my old heart—may God bless and prosper you! We must be better friends, come soon again and see me. My sojourn in the world will not be long—I have not forgot or neglected your business; you will find that I have complied with your wishes."

Whilst Mr. Warner was stepping into the carriage, the laird again wrung his hand; and, on taking the last turn from the avenue to the main road, he saw him wave his handkerchief. And, with the assistance of a pair of capital horses, he was in a short time many miles from Castle Craig.

Had the case been my own, I could not have had more gratification at the recital of all the minute details which Mr. Warner gave me of his visit to the Highlands. He reached my residence on his return, late in the evening, and proceeded with the mail, at midnight, for London. During the short interval, we employed our time in financing for the house in contemplation of the coming storm, so as to draw as little upon Mr. M'Kerrell's generosity as could be avoided; however, when he arrived in town, he found that one of their

ships had reached the Thames in safety with its valuable cargo, which, from the circumstances of the stocks in the market being entirely exhausted, commanded a very high price. This first arrival in a great measure changed the aspect of affairs with the house of Warner, Wells, & Co. ; but when ship after ship made their appearance, and their cargoes producing equally fortunate results, the house entirely recovered itself, and resumed that high position it had ever held. Mr. Warner lost no time in communicating to me this gratifying information, and attributing to me the sole credit of having saved the house from destruction, by my well-timed and salutary advice. I now urged him, as he was still young, and had a prospect of a very handsome reversion from his business, that he should wind up his affairs and retire from trade ; particularly as good old Mr. M'Kerrell could not, in the course of nature, long survive, when he would come into the vast estate of Castle Craig, and all he possessed.

This letter caused him to pay me another visit. He remained with me for some days, when he determined that he should, by the next fleet, sail for India, and dispose of their indigo estate ; but before doing so, he again took a journey to Castle Craig, and personally repaid Mr. M'Kerrell the amount he had advanced, which relieved the house from its difficulties, and thereby saved it from destruction.

Mr. Warner remained in India for two years, during which period he successfully disposed of both his property and his person. In the former case he sold the indigo estate to great advantage, and in the latter he married a young and handsome wife, the widow of a general officer in the East India Company's service. Immediately on his return to England, he withdrew himself from business, and, upon winding up the affairs of the house, he found he was possessed of a fortune far beyond his expectations. He now devoted himself to the business of the legislature, and was subsequently selected by the premier to fill a very important office in connection with the commerce of the country, which he held with much credit to himself, and to the entire approval of his sovereign, for many years, and who conferred upon him the honour of a baronetcy.

Mr. Warner now paid frequent visits with his lady and his two fine boys to Castle Craig, which afforded always the

greatest delight to the old man, who, with his old house-keeper, had now become very frail and infirm. In a few years more his nephew was at last hurriedly called from London to lay his dear old uncle (after having lived to a green old age) in the tomb of his ancestors. He spends a great portion of his time at his Highland home, and there are few men who continue to be more esteemed or respected than Sir Richard M'Kerrell Warner of Castle Craig.

The Fatal Duel.

CHAPTER I.—THE LITTLE MOUNTAIN SYLPH.

THE little story of my friend, Sir Richard Warner, affords another instance of the truth, that by following the straight path of virtue, with a consistent, upright course of life, and a *fair* opportunity, that it must eventually lead to honour and wealth. Indeed, from my experience, I have found that industry, perseverance, and patience, even if limited to very moderate talents, are certain to surmount all difficulties. It is, however, often remarked that much good fortune may be attributed to a "lucky chance." This is simply nonsense—there is *no* such thing as chance—'tis the unaccountable name for *nothing*; a firm and determined reliance on our own exertions is the true and legitimate course to lead to success—never let us trust in man—dependence on others for assistance has been the curse of thousands. "Help yourself in the first instance," was the remark of Dr. Johnson, "and the more you do so, the more your friends will assist, respect, and like you; and we cannot be too careful in the selection of our business associates, as the world always values and esteems him who lives only in the good opinion of good men."

My ever-to-be-lamented friend, Alexander Sloan, was a model in this respect—he was for a long term of years my right-hand man, and there was no one in all my banking experience in whom I could place more implicit trust.

Alexander Sloan was the tenant and representative of the fourth generation who had occupied one of my best farms; he was a noble fellow, both mentally and physically. He was universally esteemed and respected, consequently consulted by his neighbours in all matters connected with agriculture, and was generally selected as referee in any dispute, when his award was always treated as wise and conclusive. He was a *most* industrious and prosperous man, and,

whatever he tried, he did *well*. A finer worked farm or better crops were to be seen nowhere, and his rent was invariably paid to the hour. He always kept a respectable account at the bank, and many a draft upon which he passed, to assist a needy neighbour. Still, he was a prudent and cautious man, never purchasing unless he had the ready cash—eschewing all obligations of whatever nature: had he been ever so disposed, I would readily have discounted his acceptance for five thousand pounds *any day*.

At all athletic sports and games, Sandy Sloan (as he was called commonly in the locality where he resided) was perfect. Few could enter the lists with him at curling, quoiting, &c., and at the annual county races he generally left all competitors far behind him in the contest for the "Hunter's Cup," with his fine thorough-bred horse. The attachment of the Arab to his steed never could have been greater than the love and pride which Sandy had for "the Duke," of which many a nobleman and gentleman in vain attempted to be possessed. My friend, Lord S——, accosted him in my company one day with the usual salutation—"Sloan, I want to make a purchase of you, and shall leave it to yourself to name the price."

"Certainly, my lord," he replied, "any thing but the Duke, and my wife and bairns."

Sandy was fully six feet high, and finely proportioned. When mounted on "the Duke," and in his uniform as adjutant of the yeomanry cavalry, it would have been difficult to conceive a more perfect picture of health and manly bearing, whilst his countenance beamed with intelligence, generosity, courage, and good-nature. Having received a liberal education, his manners were that of perfect confidence in himself, unmixed with the least approach to presumption. Sandy, however, had one little failing, but which he never allowed to exceed bounds. He was fond of the society of his friends, and a glass after the business of the day was over; he sang a good song, and told a good story, consequently his company was courted by gentle and simple. From his local knowledge, information on public affairs, and his generally intellectual conversation, he was as acceptable a guest at the table of the nobleman, as he was with the most humble farmer in the county—what he *was*, nature made him—a perfect gentleman in principle and feeling.

His tendency for conviviality, however, was never known to interrupt his business; as, happen what might, or the time of his return home be ever so late, he failed not to be on the mountain-tops (if necessity required it) before sunrise. To this habit of early rising he used to attribute the robust constitution and high health he enjoyed; and there is little doubt but that this custom affords a source of pleasure unbounded, as the morning is infinitely the best time for work—both body and mind being rested and refreshed, and all our energies alive. Who that has seen, on a fine summer's morning, the splendour of the glorious rising sun, would not wish to continue the practice of early rising? It is then that all nature appears to rejoice; the lark springs from the lea, and sings at once at heaven's gate and to his mate darkling in the furrow. You can hear the cuckoo in the far wood; whilst the thrush, the blackbird, and the linnet, challenge each other to a burst of melody. It is perhaps the best *elixir vite*, and the readiest begetter of health and spirits, of any recipe in the philosophical *materia medica*.

Dr. Johnson was constantly making resolutions to get up early to the last part of his life, and Thomson, who cried out in his poems—

“Falsely luxurious, will not man awake?”

not only seldom got up before noon, but is said to have given as a reason that “he had no motive.” Both of these excellent persons were rendered inert, no doubt, from bad humours of body, which the practice would have done away with.

A Scottish king (James I.), who was kidnapped and made a prisoner in England when very young, attributes the alteration of his feelings, from wretchedness and misery into comfort, solely from this practice. The passage is in a beautiful poem he wrote in his captivity, called “The King's Quair, or Book.”

“O happy early exercise!
By thee came I to joy out of torment.”

He afterwards made one of the best and most accomplished sovereigns in the annals of royalty.

Mr. Sloan, who, in addition to his large farm, had carried on an extensive droving and sheep-breeding business, on

this account was frequently detained later at the principal markets than his inclinations allowed, or his safety often warranted; and, consequently, his pretty little wife, the daughter of a neighbouring laird, had some cause for anxiety when he was behind his usual hour of returning home.

"You kept me again in much anxiety last night, Sandy, love," she observed on one occasion; "I could not imagine what was happened to you—you make me very miserable when you remain so long from home; indeed you do! I sat waiting your return until I despaired of your coming at all."

"But, my dear," replied Sandy, "you know I was chairman of the great Agricultural Meeting, and I could not possibly, however anxious I might be to do so, leave amongst the first."

"But, Sandy, I am afraid you must have taken too much wine; that Laird of Balcairn is rather heavy mettle for you, and I am never happy when I know you are in his company."

Sandy, a little piqued at (he knew) this unmerited attack, replied—

"My dear, I was home here, at *latest*, by ten o'clock instead of twelve, which you allege. I took a good half-hour to rub down 'the Duke,' as the men were all in bed; and after that I went down the glen to see the nowt housed and foddered that I bought at the fair, and I was cowering in at your back, Jeanie, my woman, at the latest by eleven o'clock, and *you* were sound asleep. But you call me waur than I am; you had better say, among my other sins, that I hoccussed Joe Maxwell's mare when I won the last steeple-chase, or that the cutty-stool and me are auld freens, and I have been rebuket in the kirk."

This was the substance and defence of a curtain lecture inflicted on my friend Sandy by his little wife, who had sat waiting for him until her patience was exhausted the night previous—

"Nursing her wrath to keep it warm."

They, however, soon made it up (if any serious displeasure did exist), and Mrs. Sloan, sorry for what she had said, and for having undeservedly blamed him, now made every amends by the most tender and affectionate embrace.

Sloan had purchased an extensive sheep estate about four;

miles from his own place, Beechwood ; and almost directly through it made a road, by which he saved fully a couple of miles, and which he used often to take advantage of ; it was a lonely and unfrequented moor, and at particular seasons of the year was infested by gipsies.

One evening, on returning home after having indulged a little more than was his usual (his friends having previously warned him against taking the moorland road), he had passed the most gloomy part of the glen at a good round pace, when a stout brawny fellow, springing from a bush, presented a rusty pistol at his head, and demanded all the cash, &c., he had about him. Sandy was for the moment taken by surprise, not from alarm, but, as he afterwards said, at the impudence of the rascal ; so, with a contemptible sneer he warned him instantly to be off, or he would crack his head for him in a way that, with all his tinkering, he would not find it easy again to souther. However, the ruffian seized his bridle, and as neither Sandy nor "the Duke" had been accustomed to, or could stand this indignity, he, with the butt-end of his loaded hunting-whip, knocked the pistol out of his hand, following it up with a blow that laid him prostrate, and dismounting, seized him by the collar, threw him on his face, thrashing and leaving him calling out piteously for mercy. A more prudent and less courageous man would have hurried home, thankful to have made such an escape, perhaps from the whole horde, which he knew could not have been far distant. It was not so, however, with Sandy ; he began, as he pursued his way home, to turn over in his mind the daring and cowardly nature of the attack, and the result of his cogitations was, that he had been assuredly a very ill-used gentleman, and came to the sapient conclusion that he had not given the scoundrel half enough, and returned to the spot with the laudable resolution of repeating the dose. It was a more serious affair with him this time, as he found the whole gang, seven in number, had mustered round their fallen comrade. However, nothing daunted by this immense augmentation of the force of the enemy, he without a moment's hesitation dashed in amongst, and coolly delivered the following laconic but emphatic address to them :—"Now, gentlemen," he said, "as I have not the means or opportunity of reading the Riot Act, I now offer you two alternatives, which are, that you either leave my premises *instantly*, with your pots and pans,

creels and cuddies, or I will certainly thrash you ane after the ither within an inch o' your livers." The latter challenge was almost instantly accepted, as they rushed upon Sandy *en masse*; but he, having a thorough knowledge of broadsword exercise, dealt his blows so quick and so effectually, that he levelled four of them with the ground, whilst the other three were thankful to take to their heels. Having achieved this signal victory, he now once more turned his horse's head homewards.

I should often have been much at a loss in conducting the business of the bank, but for the assistance of Sloan. From him I was constantly receiving the most important information, as to the transactions, character, and creditable position of many of our customers. He, on his return from his monthly visits to the different cattle-markets, where he generally had the largest and best droves, always reported to me the state of the trade, the sales effected, and by whom, so that I knew exactly the true character and nature of all the transactions that came before me, and my confidence was established or shaken by any statements made in keeping with, or contrary to the information I had received, and upon which I could so fully rely.

After business hours, it was frequently my habit to walk up to Beechwood and chat with Sandy for an hour or two, on this and other subjects; and I have often remarked, on my return home, how much pleasure those visits used to afford me, as, besides the attraction of Sandy's intelligent conversation, I received also much delight and gratification from the highly gifted musical acquirements of Mrs. Sloan and himself, who played and sung their native airs in a style that I have never heard surpassed. The former used to sing to me the sweet melody of the "Land of the leal," with such thrilling and touching pathos as frequently to bring tears to my eyes; whilst Sloan, in the best and most manly taste, to his wife's accompaniment used to give us, to the same air, Burns's imperishable ode of "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled!" There was no display or aping at effect in their singing, and their reading of the poetry (the greatest charm of vocal music) was true, distinct, and without extraneous embellishment.

There is a tendency in many private, and even some well-educated public singers, when they arrive at the dignity of

being accompanied, to put on a sort of noisy fierceness ; and, as it were, bully the air they are singing, so that the sweetness of the melody is by such persons frequently lost, in consequence of the malreading of the poetry, and, worse than all, mumbled out often in a manner that no mortal can understand.

Another inducement for me to visit Beechwood was their three lovely children, two girls and a boy, to whom I became much attached, as was my wont with all children, whenever chance threw them in my way. I could only account for this propensity (or call it weakness in my character if you will) from the circumstance of the contrast displayed between their artless innocence, and the coarse habits, craft, knavery, and deceit, in which I had almost daily experience in business. Their eldest little girl, about seven years old, was my most especial favourite.

"She was the spirit of the place,
With eye so mild and cheek so fair;
Her form so playful, and its grace
Mock'd her own mountain air."

She was certainly a most endearing child. I never yet met with her equal for beauty and intelligence. She was like a pet fawn ; timid, diffident, and bashful in the extreme to strangers, but to me all confidence and affection. She used to wander away by herself, often a great distance from the house, to the wild and craggy country that surrounded it, when (instinctively, as if aware of her innocence) the different animals, sheep, deer, goats, &c., used to flock around her.

Whenever Nelly saw me approach the avenue in the distance, she would make one bound to the bottom of the hill, and moved with such astonishing rapidity, that I would tremble with apprehension as I saw her skip from the point of one jutting-rock to another, as fearless and as playful as a mountain kid. With light and elastic step, she passed securely along, where, to all appearance, a human foot could find no place to rest on ; her figure was gracefully formed, her face was fair, and the freshness of her cheek rivalled the roses that breathed and bloomed around her ; her hair hung about her face and neck in loose ringlets, and, as she sportively put her tresses aside, she displayed a beautifully formed forehead, and her eyes sparkled the while with a coquettish

playfulness, which almost led you to think that she was not altogether unconscious of her beauty. With the glow of health on her countenance, and her flaxen curls streaming behind her, a more enchanting picture of beauty and innocence could scarcely be imagined. When she reached, and that in an incredibly short space of time, the spot where I stood, she would make one bound into my arms, and, ere we approached the porch of the house, had narrated to me all the domestic incidents in rapid succession that had occurred since my last visit (for Nelly was a notorious little gossip).

My muse was seldom excited into action, but *she* did once rouse me up in the following lines :—

TO MY WEE PET ON HER BIRTHDAY.

Dear, timid, modest, sweet wee pet,
Pure, spotless, and unsullied yet,
By all the wiles and craft of life,
The turmoil and the sin of strife.

Receive the tribute of a friend,
Who on your natal morn would send
His greetings from the shrine of love,
Unmingled truths as from above.

May blessings on thy guiltless head
Be pour'd abundantly, and spread
O'er all your pilgrimage below,
Free from all pain and toil and woe !

May gentle Jesus guide your path,
Who never show'd to young ones wrath,
But said with holy majesty,
" Let little children come to me ! "

Dear, fascinating babe of bliss,
Born for a holier sphere than this,
Whose blushing smile doth joy impart,
Like moonlight music o'er the heart.

Whose beauteous face like angel's smile,
Soft, clear, and meek, my artless child,
Pure as the morning's cloudless beam,
That glistens o'er the silvery stream.

In struggling through life's checker'd tract,
That weary part we all must act,
May every boon that can excel
Be shower'd upon my pretty Nell !

May her sweet look, like summer's sky,
Her laughing lip and sparkling eye,
Be never dull'd nor dimm'd by care,
But all be peace and comfort there !

May seraphs guard and nightly keep
Their vigils while she rests in sleep,
And kindred cherubs hover by,
To soothe her with sweet melody !

And when her sand of life has run,
All innocence as now begun,
May angels spirit her above
To realms of light, of joy, and love !

Again may Heaven its favours shed
This morn upon my sweet wee maid,
And all its precious blessings lend !
So prays a warm and tender friend.

I have been the more particular in the description of my little favourite, as she will afterwards figure as the heroine of one of my narratives, in which she afforded me much cause for happiness and congratulation.

Sloan's monthly visits to market (if he had been at all fortunate in disposing of his cattle) were frequently followed by him by a little convivial enjoyment at almost every stage on his return home ; the consequence of which was, that his nerves were generally somewhat shaken for a day or two after his arrival. On one of these occasions a most ludicrous scene occurred with him, and I feel disposed to laugh even now when I think of it. He had brought home with him a large sum in notes, to be paid into the bank on the morning after his return. He started with the cash (after having partaken of an early breakfast), and which, as was his wont, he carried in his left hand, considering it thereby more safe than securing it in his pocket. He had thrown a wooden bridge over the river on his estate, which saved him a full mile in coming to town. It happened, on crossing this bridge on this occasion, that he seized the railing with his left hand for support, and in doing so inadvertently changed the notes he held to his right hand. It may appear incredible, but on reaching the bank, the cash not being in his usual hand, he came to the immediate conclusion that he had, in some unaccountable manner, lost it. The cashier, immediately when he entered, saw from his disturbed look that something was wrong, and inquired—"What is the matter, Mr. Sloan?"

"The matter," quoth Sandy, "the matter is neither more nor less, than that I have lost eleven hundred pounds that I came to pay into my account!" He was then requested, as

in all such cases, to examine his every pocket, which he did—coat, breeches, waistcoat, hat, &c. ; and in doing so, in his agitation and excitement, kept constantly and unconsciously changing the money from one hand to the other. After every search had been made, it was suggested that he had better step into the parlour and see me. When he made his appearance, I was immediately struck with the unusual expression of his countenance.

“Good gracious, Sandy!” I exclaimed, “what *is* the matter—what *has* happened?”

He immediately told me that he had lost eleven hundred pounds ; I asked him how—when—where ? He could give me no explanation further than that it was gone, but how, he could not tell ; and he appeared to me, for the first time, incapable of exertion, or of recalling any circumstance to his remembrance that could account for this calamity. After calmly talking over the matter with him for some time, I at last asked him—“What is that you have got in your hand ?” When *his* joy, and the relief to *my* feelings, can be more easily imagined than expressed, when it was discovered that there were the notes, all safe and sound. My simple remark to him was—“Sandy, I fear you have been indulging a trifle too much after the market !”

He, in reply, and ashamed of himself, made for the door, muttering—“Indeed, sir, it looks very like it !”

CHAPTER II.—THE MOUNTAIN STORM—THE HOSTILE MEETING.

SLOAN’s humane but adventurous and indomitable spirit, led him often into very perilous and perplexing positions. On one occasion he had almost fallen a sacrifice in his endeavour to save human life and protect his property.

“For ance he lay a hale nicht lang,
Aneath a dreary wreath o’ snaw.”

It was approaching Christmas season, when he had made a very large purchase of sheep for the purpose of stocking his moorland estate, and to tend which he had brought four herds from a distance, who were as yet unacquainted with

the boundaries and the neighbourhood. He had returned home one day, finished an early dinner, and was about to enjoy the society of his wife and children for the remainder of the evening, when the sky on a sudden became overcast, showing every indication of an approaching snow-storm. Sloan's thoughts were immediately directed to the safety of his poor stranger herds and his valuable flocks; so he determined, contrary to the entreaties of his wife, to visit the moor, before the storm, which had already commenced, became worse, with the intention of driving the sheep to the sheds, and bringing the herds home with him. So, with his cavalry cloak across his shoulders, he started for the mountains, a distance of about four miles from Beechwood. When he reached the ground he immediately set to work, and, with the assistance of the men, had nearly accomplished his purpose of driving the sheep all in, when the storm, which had been long threatening, now assumed an appearance such as to excite in him some degree of alarm; but, altogether regardless of himself, being more solicitous for the safety of the poor herds, he told them to make for home without a moment's loss of time, and he would follow when he had housed all the sheep. The herds remonstrated, and entreated to be allowed to remain and return with him, but he would hear no reason. "This is not a time for jabbering," he said; "do as I bid you, or not one of you will return to the village to tell the tale. Do you see yonder black spot in the far distance, on the extreme top of the knowl? 'tis a stunted thorn, mark it well, and do not keep your eyes off it for a moment—make for it with all speed. When there, you will see the farm-steadings in the valley, but do not imagine yourselves secure until you reach them—now run—the storm increases—fly for your lives, and leave me to manage as I best can."

By the time the herds had with difficulty reached the farm, the storm was at its height, and objects were scarcely discernible at a yard's distance. Meantime poor Sloan had finished his work, and also started for home, confident in the certainty of his reaching it before nightfall; but in this he calculated without his host, as the merciless storm continued to rage unabated, and, being without a compass, he had nothing to guide him. After wandering for nearly two long hours, he at last became quite bewildered. He was not, however,

easily dismayed or subdued, so he kept moving on, and had trod many a weary mile, with the snow, which had in some places nearly reached his knees, drifting in his face; when at length, exhausted nature gained the ascendancy over his dauntless spirit, and he sank to the ground under the partial shelter of a rocky cliff, in a state of stupor and total prostration, with his faithful dog at his feet.

We shall now return to Beechwood, where we left Mrs. Sloan in so much anxiety about her husband; and this was greatly increased as the storm thickened, and threatened to continue with unabated fury. When the shepherds reached the farm they could give no further account than what I have already related—only that, after parting with Mr. Sloan, they soon lost sight of him, and followed his instructions by hurrying on, of which they saw the necessity.

When it became nearly dark, and he did not return, his wife and neighbours became greatly alarmed for his safety. At last several of his friends and servants volunteered to start in search of him with lanterns. It was found, however, impossible to proceed, the snow falling so thickly that no trace of any road or pathway could be seen. It may therefore be well imagined what a wretched night poor Jane Sloan spent—she was almost distracted.

By break of day, when the storm had subsided, a large number of the gentlemen and farmers of the surrounding neighbourhood assembled at Beechwood, with the determination of prosecuting the search, and it was with much difficulty that poor Jane was prevented from accompanying them. Eighteen in number, including the surgeon from the town, started on this humane and laudable expedition, with the resolve not to return without him, dead or alive. When they reached the moor, they divided into parties of four, each having two or three dogs. They for hours had traversed hill and dale without success, and were about leaving the highlands, when their attention was arrested by the distant sound of the moaning howl of poor Sloan's dog. This was heard with shouts of joy—"Onward!" was reiterated by them from far and near. Sloan's favourite pointer was the first to reach the spot where he had sunk the night previously, and where—

"He lay like a warrior taking his rest,
With his martial cloak around him."

The snow had drifted half-way up his body, and not a moment was lost in using the necessary means to restore animation ; and great, indeed, was the joy when the surgeon announced that life was not extinct. A rustic litter was immediately formed, and, covered up with many cloaks and plaids, he was carried home upon able and willing shoulders.

Poor Sloan's life for several days hung by a thread, and a week had elapsed ere the doctor would give any assurance of the certainty of his recovery ; but his noble constitution was proof against even such a shock as he had received—it saved him, and he gradually began to rally. Still he never spoke : the greatest tranquillity being recommended, no one but his wife, who had never left the room, and the doctor, were allowed to approach him. I was the first stranger admitted, and to whom he first opened his lips. After speaking very soothingly to him for some time, he at last turned his head towards me, and seemed to have the impression that some awful disaster had happened to him on the high-road, as the first words he uttered were—

“ Have I lamed ‘the Duke ;’ or was I tossed out of the gig ? ”

I replied—“ Neither, my dear good fellow ; pray, compose yourself.” He then, with apparent emotion, whispered—

“ Are Jeanie and the bairns well ? ”

And, on my assuring him that they were all in perfect health, he exclaimed—“ Thank God for all his mercies ! ” and again seemed to sink into his former state of insensibility.

By dint of restoratives cautiously administered, with nourishing food, and the greatest care to keep him from excitement, with the tender nursing of his wife, he soon gained sufficient strength to enable him to take a little out-door exercise ; and within two months of this sad event, which had nearly been the cause of the loss of a most valuable life, he was enabled to attend to his usual business at the market-town, where he was received by great and small with heartfelt and honest congratulations on his having made such a perilous escape.

I now proceed, with the most painful feelings, to narrate the melancholy conclusion to the honourable and philanthropic career of this excellent man. Poor Sloan was sacrificed, in the very prime of his manhood, by the hand of a vindictive, cruel, and ruthless villain.

About three miles from Beechwood, in an old baronial castle, surrounded by an extensive estate, resided the proprietor, the Honourable Hector Bruce. He had only within the last twelve months succeeded to the property, which he inherited from an uncle (brother to his mother). He had at one period held the rank of a Captain in the Guards, and for some unexplained reason was obliged to exchange with a cavalry regiment, then in active service in the peninsula, where he was engaged in many of the campaigns.

He was still a young man when he came to reside at Kenglen Castle; but very shortly became very much disliked, both by the neighbouring gentry and the people around his property. He had a most imperious temper, over which he exercised no control; indeed, gave it full vent often on the most trifling occasions, so much so that servants could never remain with him beyond a week or two at a time. It was whispered that he had been compelled to leave the army from his quarrelsome disposition, and that he was notoriously a professed duellist. Sloan was his nearest neighbour. Bruce first introduced himself to him by the purchase of some cattle. He was a great improver, fond of field-sports, horses, &c.; so he found my friend Sandy in those respects not only a convenient and congenial associate, but an intelligent and agreeable companion. Sandy was consequently often at the castle, and in time they became intimate friends; but it was a matter of wonder to many, how he managed to live so long in peace with him. Many were the scrapes and perils he rescued Bruce from; generally in consequence of his ungovernable temper. One day, in trying the paces of a young horse he intended to purchase, he in a passion struck the animal a blow on the ear, which the spirited brute resented by bounding off with him, and was making straight for a precipice, over which he would have been thrown and certainly dashed to pieces, had not Sloan, with that presence of mind and self-possession which never failed him, and with nerves of steel, seized the bridle and arrested its furious progress. His disposition to quarrel was such, that when he was in the least degree crossed it mattered not to him with whom he had the contention. Sloan had one day gone with him to a horse fair, which was attended by numbers of low Irishmen. Bruce had been drinking, and as usual began to insult and quarrel with

several of them. They stood it with patience for some time. At last he was surrounded by a crowd—many that composed it had been at some period or other in his employment, and subjected to his abuse. They became infuriated and ungovernable, and would have tore him piecemeal, if Sloan, to whom, for his popularity, they all made way, had not dashed in amongst them, seized Bruce and carried him away in his arms (as if he had been a child), beyond the pale of their vengeance. Indeed, a week seldom passed that he was not getting into some difficulty, or causing dispeace in the neighbourhood; still Sandy stuck by him, and seemed to have a power and control over his ungovernable temper, which no one else connected with him possessed. It was the wonder of all that knew him, and was accounted for only from the extreme good-nature and persuasive manner he found it necessary to practise with him; but, as it will appear, he also in a short time failed to conciliate, and became the victim of this atrocious miscreant.

Bruce had long had a desire to represent the county in Parliament; and, as an election was shortly anticipated, he offered himself as a candidate in opposition to the sitting member, General B——. Our county qualifications at that time were limited, amounting only to about one hundred and fifty, in consequence of the lands being apportioned mostly in large estates. The contest and canvass were very keen. Bruce did not spare the needful to obtain a vote, and the general opinion was that it would be a very close run. Many of the smaller lairds withheld their pledges from either candidate until they saw, as they said, how Mr. Sloan was going to vote; as, from his intelligence, sagacity, and knowledge of public affairs, they knew they could not do wrong in following his example.

Sloan maintained a total silence as to his intentions on the subject; still Bruce seemed to depend on his suffrage, influence, and support, as a matter of course. On several occasions they had dissensions on political affairs, in which Sandy gave Bruce to understand exactly his feelings on certain subjects, in which he entirely differed with him in opinion.

At one of his public-meetings, Bruce, in an address to his constituents, made use of certain remarks, which showed a decided disposition to oppress the poor and working-

classes; and strongly expressed his determination to act up to such measures, and give them every support if returned to Parliament. This public avowal gave Mr. Sloan much anxiety and distress. He reminded Bruce of what his opinions had always been on this subject, and hoped he would think better of it before the morning, when the election was to take place. As it was anticipated, as the day approached the struggle proved a very near one. Bruce's paid adherents had been most active, and gold had effected what professed patriotism, or his claims upon the constituency, would have failed to accomplish. When the morning came, the election was the cause of much excitement, and there was no end of disputed votes on both sides: whilst these were undergoing the usual scrutiny, the chances appeared in favour of the new candidate. At this time, Sloan was observed to be in close and earnest conversation with Bruce. Both sides knew that upon *him* now depended the result of the election.

At last Mr. Sloan's name was called, when, in a dignified and manly tone of voice, he thus addressed the court and people—

"I am aware," he said, "that many persons here present have concluded that my intention is, on this occasion, to record my suffrage in favour of the Honourable Mr. Bruce, whom, personally, I much regard and respect; but I beg to state that, upon several vital points of much philanthropic and public interest, I cannot possibly coincide in opinion with him, and in the sentiments which he has expressed on those most important matters, and is determined to adhere to them should he be returned to parliament. I therefore, upon my conscience and on principle, feel that I never can agree with him on these subjects, as I will never consent to lend *my* aid in any attempt to crush the poor, hard-working man. *Vox populi, vox Dei*; I therefore tender my vote in favour of General B——."

At this declaration all Bruce's party stood aghast. They well knew what the consequence would be. A large phalanx of the constituency that had *hung* back until they saw what Sloan would do, now rushed forward and gave their votes in accordance with his, which entirely changed the aspect of affairs, and General B—— was triumphantly returned.

Early on the following morning, a gentleman rode up to

the door at Beechwood, and requested a private interview with Mr. Sloan ; and, being introduced, handed him a letter, informing him that he had been requested to deliver it personally, by his friend, the Honourable Mr. Bruce of Kenglen Castle. It ran thus—

“ KENGLLEN CASTLE, *Friday morning.*

“ SIR—From the course you chose to pursue at yesterday’s election, and from the injury and insult I have in consequence been exposed to, I have deputed the bearer, Lieutenant-Colonel Hart, to deliver this note, and to request that you will place him in immediate communication with a friend, so that I may obtain that satisfaction which one gentleman justly claims from another under such circumstances.—I am, &c.,

“ HECTOR BRUCE.”

Sandy Sloan was quite at a loss what to think, and how to act, in this novel position in which he was placed. He had often been the means of preventing many a quarrel, when no one else could do so, and had all his life deprecated the sinful and senseless system of duelling. He informed Colonel Hart of this, and requested him to use his influence with Mr. Bruce to prevent the affair proceeding further ; assuring him, at the same time, that he intended no personal insult to him, that he had acted entirely upon public grounds, and would give him every explanation he might require, and make any reasonable apology if he imagined that he had wilfully offended him, so that the matter might yet, if possible, be amicably arranged.

Colonel Hart, however, emphatically told him, that he was charged with no discretionary power to act on his own judgment, and his instructions were such, that he knew no arrangement he could offer would suit or be entertained by his friend, excepting a meeting, and therefore begged to inform him that he could not negotiate beyond the request contained in Mr. Bruce’s note ; and, expressing a hope to hear from his friend as early as possible in the course of the morning, he took his departure.

Sloan, immediately after this unpleasant and embarrassing interview, wrote to his old tried friend, Major Goodwyn, late of the — Hussars, informing him in a hurried note of the position in which he was placed, and requested the

servant to bring the major back with him if possible, on his return, in the conveyance. Major Goodwyn was one of those warm-hearted, high-tempered, but shrewd men, who in mostly all his actions was governed by impulse ; but, when necessity required it, evinced a courage, prudence, and determination of character rarely to be met with.

When he arrived at Beechwood, and was informed of all the details and circumstances connected with the affair, he at once said that he had no alternative but to see this Colonel Hart, and for this purpose proceeded to Kenglen Castle. On his return from this interview, he reported that, after having exhausted every possible argument, he found that nothing would satisfy Mr. Bruce but a meeting, which he had been compelled to fix for the following morning at five o'clock.

It was so usual for Sloan, from his various business engagements, to be irregular in his hours, that Mrs. Sloan had not the least suspicion of what was about to occur. He therefore devoted the greater part of the night in arranging his affairs ; and, amongst other matters, did not overlook (for he had become wealthy) to provide for his poor dependants.

It was a lovely morning in the month of May when Sloan and Major Goodwyn reached the appointed spot. It was the very glen in which Sandy had nearly perished in the snow ; *now*, smiling nature pervaded the whole scene, and its solemn tranquillity was only varied by the humming of bees, and the sweet carol of the lark as he mounted to his aerial sphere. Mr. Bruce and his friend had already reached the spot ; and Colonel Hart and Major Goodwyn immediately proceeded to settle preliminaries. Sandy took this opportunity of making an appeal to the heart of his revengeful opponent, in the endeavour to allay the venom of his implacable wrath.

"Kenglen," he said, "before proceeding any further in this unfortunate affair, believe me, I am truly sorry if I have offended you, or wilfully done you that injury which you impute to me ; and, in presence of these gentlemen, am prepared to make any amends to you that one man can require of another. You *know*, Kenglen, that I do not lack courage ; that has been too often tested to be questioned—it has even been displayed in your own service, and has been the means

of saving your life more than once. I care not, Mr. Bruce, to run this risk on my own account ; but I have a wife and bairns that are dearer to me than life itself—'tis for them that, in the event of my fall in this mad encounter, my feelings are excited, and my strong nerves are shaken ; and my stout heart trembles when I think what their wretched state will be if this affair should prove fatal to me. Besides, there are hundreds of poor souls in the neighbourhood whose very existence depends upon my exertions and life—there is my hand, man, you have often grasped it in that friendship from me which is now as warm towards you as ever."

To this touching remonstrance Bruce made no reply, but muttered something about loutish want of courage.

"No, Kenglen," said Sloan ; "I again repeat to you that I am no coward—this you know well, but I have another reason for pausing in this matter ere I proceed. We do not meet on equal terms ; you are a practised pistol shot—I am in this quite inexperienced. Had I been consulted, I should have made the choice of other weapons ; therefore, when you *knowingly* take this advantage, 'tis you, Bruce, who is the coward. Since you will fight, give me fair play ; cast your coat, and man to man, and hand to hand, let's try our strength ; or, if you prefer it, I challenge you to combat either with the rapier or broadsword."

To this Bruce replied—

"I did not come here to parley in this manner—take your ground, sir ; I treat your endeavours to evade the chastisement you deserve with the contempt they merit."

Colonel Hart and Major Goodwyn now proceeded to perform their part in the sad drama. The former gave the signal, and both combatants fired at the same moment—Sloan pointing his pistol in the air ; but Bruce had nearly finished the business, as his ball passed through the collar of his opponent's coat, without, however, his sustaining any injury. Sloan had cut the fleshy part of his hand with the flint of his pistol, which streamed with blood ; which, being noticed by Bruce, he gave a Satanic smile, thinking doubtless that he had wounded him. Major Goodwyn now interposed, and suggested, or rather demanded, that as every reasonable satisfaction had been given, and as his friend Mr. Sloan had offered an apology and fired in the air, that the affair, as ruled by all men of honour, should terminate.

All negotiation was, however, deprecated by Bruce.

"In that case," said Major Goodwyn, on being informed of Bruce's savage and bloodthirsty resolve, "I withdraw my friend Mr. Sloan, and will stand by the consequences."

During this discussion, Sloan, with his pistol in his hand hanging listlessly by his side, seemed in a state of bewilderment and sluggish inanimation. Goodwyn had seized his arm to remove him from the ground, when Hart placed Bruce again in his position, who called out at the pitch of his voice—

"Sloan, you are a coward!"

This seemed to arouse Sandy a little from his stupor, and his reply was only a look of the most withering contempt.

"Regard them not," said Major Goodwyn; "come along, man!" but Sloan seemed riveted to the spot, and incapable of moving.

Hart (instructed by Bruce) now called out—"Are you ready?"

"Murder!" shouted Goodwyn; and, before he had time to move or act, the signal was again given—Bruce alone fired, and *Sloan fell*.

On the surgeon examining his wound, he discovered that he had been shot through the heart.

Major Goodwyn received him in his arms as he fell. Bruce ran forward to assist, when he saw that his shot had taken such decided effect.

"Stand back!" cried Goodwyn, frantic with excitement. "Ruffian! you have taken the life of a man, the latch of whose shoe you were unworthy to untie. Keep from me, or I shall kill you!" and he struck him a blow with his clenched fist in the face, that levelled him with the ground. Hart now endeavoured to approach. "At your peril, come near me, you miscreant! Murderous caitiff!" again shouted Goodwyn, casting the pistol in his face; "the vengeance of Heaven will fall on you for this horrid deed, and hell will be your portion."

The firing having been heard, the hills were now covered with the peasantry, making for the spot. "Fly!" cried Goodwyn to Bruce and Hart, "and save your wretched lives; else these honest people, who are now approaching, will tear you limb from limb, without requiring the services of the hangman."

A moment's reflection assured them of the necessity of following this advice. They immediately made for their carriage, which was waiting at a short distance, and effected their escape, with the execrations of hundreds resounding after them.

Nothing definite was ever after heard of Bruce ; but it was said that he died in great wretchedness and poverty in Spain. Hart succeeded in making his escape to America, and there joined the insurgent army, where he was shortly afterwards killed.

I would fain draw the curtain on the remainder of this sad, sad tale, and of the heart-rending scene that took place when the lifeless body of my poor friend was conveyed home—the inconsolable misery of his poor widow, and the general grief expressed at this doleful event over the whole country, around which he was so well known, and his character so highly appreciated.

Hundreds attended his funeral, and great were the lamentations ; every one feeling that they had lost a steady and ever warm personal friend, by the death of SANDY SLOAN. "Take him for all in all, we shall not look upon his like again."

The Habob's Trust.

CHAPTER I.—AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR.

I HAVE long since found from experience that, in dispensing charity, liberality consists not so much in giving a great deal as in giving seasonably, at the same time bringing the mind to bear earnestly and feelingly on the different cases of those objects who require relief. In prosperity ourselves, without this, we should fall short of our duty ; *as how can a man in the plenitudes of satiety imagine that there is such a thing as starving ?* but, I confess, we sometimes, too, meet with exceptions to this, as was exemplified in the instance of my much lamented friend, Mr. Halkett. His case affords another proof that, let man plan or propose as he may, God, in his mysterious and inscrutable wisdom, will rule and dispose.

It was a beautiful evening in the month of June, 18—. I had finished the day's business of the bank, and was seated in my hostel (a little temple of comfort and civility) waiting for dinner, when a handsome travelling chariot with four reeking horses, and heavily laden with luggage, drove to the door. This was quite an event in our little town ; and the carriage had scarcely stopped before it was surrounded by a crowd of women and children, who stared, and exhibited looks of astonishment little less than would have been expected from a horde of Cherokee Indians.

Two servants, the one a very staid and respectable-looking person in a quiet livery, and the other dressed in the Indian costume, descended from the barouche seat, and assisted their master in getting out of the carriage. He was a man who, from his looks, might be between fifty and sixty. He walked with a firm step, and, although he was healthy and hale in his general appearance, still, to a common observer, he showed indications of having suffered at some period of his life from the effects of a tropical climate. He was shown

into the parlour adjoining to the one I occupied, and I was amusing myself looking from the window at the servants removing the luggage, when my landlady entered the room, and entreated that I would allow a strange gentleman who had just arrived to join me at dinner, which was just being served up. In reply, I sent my compliments to the gentleman that I should be quite delighted to have the pleasure of his company. I was speculating as to who my guest might prove to be, when he entered the room, and in a very courteous manner thanked me for my civility.

We very soon got into confidential conversation ; when I learned from him that he had just arrived from India, where he had spent the greatest portion of his life. He had landed, he said, on the coast of Ireland, and was making the best of his way to London (he supposed) ; but at present he had no fixed plans. He handed me his card, on which was inscribed—"Mr. Caleb Halkett ;" and mentioned that, in his progress along the road, he had been quite fascinated with the beauty of the country around, and spoke of remaining a week or two to enjoy the sport of fishing for which, he had been informed, the streams adjacent were very favourable. I informed him in return who I was, and tendered my assistance in contributing to his amusement ; at the same time inviting him to visit me, stating that I should have much pleasure in introducing him to my family.

"We will talk of that to-morrow morning," he replied, "when I shall have occasion to call upon you at the bank upon business."

I became quite fascinated with my newly-acquired friend ; his polished suavity of manner, unobtrusive common-sense, his attention to the little courtesies at table—which add so much to comfort, and is always the test of one who has mixed in the best society—with the obvious honesty of purpose and generosity which pervaded his whole conversation, at once secured my confidence and friendship. The night was far advanced ere we parted, and I arranged, by appointment, to meet him at the bank early in the morning.

When Mr. Halkett called upon me on the following day, I was engaged with my old and much-valued friend, Dr. Moore, the clergyman of our parish, to whom I introduced him ; and, after some conversation, they both promised to dine with me that afternoon. Dr. Moore, I knew, would be

a most eligible person, and quite suited to Mr. Halkett, to accompany him in his excursions. He could devote time to his occasional amusement, from the indulgence of which I was precluded on account of the incessant claims upon me in business; and, being an accomplished gentleman in education and manners, and having seen much of the world, I was sure that he and Mr. Halkett would be most likely to coincide in opinion on most subjects.

Dr. Moore in his youth had been the tutor and travelling companion of the illustrious Lord C——, and, being much of the same age, they had become attached friends. His fine manly appearance, and fascinating manners, had captivated the affections of a young lady, the daughter of an Irish nobleman, in whose company they had travelled for several months. Her father, on being made aware of the attachment, was much displeased; but when he afterwards discovered that they were so devoted to each other, and the high character that was given of Mr. Moore by Lord C——, he made a virtue of necessity, and the young couple were married by the Protestant clergyman at Berne. Having been for several years educated for, and a probationer of, the Church of Scotland, the living which he at present enjoyed (the gift of government) was procured for him, where he settled down in the greatest contentment for nearly twenty years, beloved and esteemed, not only by his own parishioners, but by all the county, at the tables of the best families of which he was always a most acceptable guest. Mrs. Moore was a very sweet, amiable person; and, although she had a family of six boys—all fine fellows, their ages ranging from five to thirteen—still she found sufficient time to be ever doing good, relieving the poor, and administering to the sick and afflicted.

When Dr. Moore left us, Mr. Halkett informed me that he required to negotiate a draft on London of three hundred pounds. "But I know," he said, "that it is contrary to your rules to do matters of this sort without reference, which I have not the power at present to give you. I have, however, brought sufficient with me, which I shall lodge in security for the advance, until the due course of post from London, when I have no doubt that you will receive the needful," upon which he produced a casket, containing what I perceived at a glance was filled with brilliants and rubies of immense value. This I at once declined accepting, informing him at

the same time that I should have much pleasure in advancing him the pecuniary supply he required, being quite satisfied that I had no reason for apprehension as to the draft being dishonoured.

After having finished our business, Mr. Halkett amused himself in viewing the country around, with which he seemed much gratified, and at the hour appointed drove me home in his carriage, where we found Dr. Moore had been waiting some time for us. We spent a most delightful day, and my favourable impressions of Mr. Halkett of the previous evening were, if possible, increased upon our further acquaintance; my wife and family were equally fascinated with him as I was, whilst Dr. Moore and he seemed at once to have fraternized in their every feeling. I never before met with a person with whom I became so soon acquainted, and whose manners, moves, tastes, and inclinations, I at once so perfectly understood. In conversing on the subject of his morning's saunter around the neighbourhood, he mentioned having seen a place which very much took his fancy. It was comparatively a modern house attached to a mouldering pile of Gothic architecture, with an old tower placed like a linnet's nest in a thicket of natural timber. From his description, I immediately recognized it as "The Grove," the old jointure house on my own estate, and laughingly remarked that, if this neighbourhood took his fancy, he might have "The Grove," now unoccupied, as his residence, which was only half a mile from where we sat, and which with very little trouble might be put in repair, and beautified to his taste. He seemed pleased with my remarks, and observed that more unlikely occurrences had taken place. "Indeed," he remarked, "it is of little consequence where I settle down during the short tenure I now hold of life, as I have no knowledge of a single person alive whom I can claim as a relative, as, from every inquiry I have made, it would appear that my whole kith and kindred are extirpated. I have therefore little to live for, and no inducement to settle in any particular locality." Mr. Halkett continued to reside at this time in our neighbourhood for a considerable period, when we exchanged daily visits. He still spoke in much admiration of "The Grove," and one morning observed to me that he had been thinking seriously as to what I had remarked concerning it; "and I confess," he said, "I have

experienced more pleasure than I have done for years in the kindness I have received from you within the last week or two ; and, if there is one spot by another that I have seen, it would certainly be 'The Grove' (with which I have already so many happy associations) that would take my fancy. I am, as you may have remarked, particularly fond of all outdoor exercises, and, from what I can learn, this neighbourhood has great attractions to the angler—another inducement which would tend to bias me were I disposed to think of any other locality. I am obliged to go to London to look after many important affairs, but will return very shortly, when I shall then arrange as to my future settlement. But it is a sad affair for a person who has been accustomed, at one period of his life, to be surrounded with devoted, affectionate souls, smiling faces, and merry hearts, to be cast adrift as it were, without an anchor, on the turbulent ocean of this cold and heartless world ; and it is uphill work with one who, for the greatest portion of his life, has had his every wish not only supplied, but anticipated, to be necessitated, with the additional misery of impaired mental and physical health, to make arrangements for settling down to a life of solitude, and whose only employment in anticipation will be that of being compelled to cater for his own personal wants, which, during all his former life, had never a tithe of his consideration."

"This is a gloomy view to take of matters, Mr. Halkett," I replied. "We do not know what blessings may be in reserve for us, even in this world."

"There is no change of events, let them be never so favourable," he returned, "that can compensate for the past in my history. Still I have, in many respects, been much favoured—not the least of which is (although few possess a more lively feeling than I do in the hour of affliction, or have suffered more from poignant grief,) being blessed with the gift of a naturally contented mind, and a disposition (if within the bounds of possibility) to take a bright view of passing events, and to render all the assistance in my power to alleviate the sufferings of my fellow-creatures, having in many instances learned from my own observation, that

'Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn.'

"However," he said, with a benign smile, "we shall change this subject for the present."

"And in its stead," said Dr. Moore, "let us arrange what amusement we are able to afford you, during the short time you can at present remain with us."

"Why not drive Mr. Halkett up to my moorland property?" I observed. "I understand the streams are in fine fishing condition at present, and I am sure Mr. Kettle, our venerable friend the clergyman, will render us all the assistance in his power; and I do not believe there is a more scientific or successful practical angler in broad Scotland than Johnny Havery, his sexton, beadle, and servant of all work, if we can secure his assistance. Many a stranger who has had the advantage of Johnny's tuition in the 'gentle art' has, within the lapse of a single week, been made a proficient by following his instructions, and by attention to certain steady but very simple rules of the utmost importance, though frequently neglected and overlooked by the experienced; and, 'as a companion of the angle,' it would be difficult to find a more amusing one than Johnny, although, from his having been accustomed for a long course of years to carry the 'bag and the creel,' he has been encouraged to join in conversation, and thereby imbibed a manner and style of familiar chatting, which to a stranger, on first impression of him, often appeared obtrusive and impertinent. He had, besides, certain little peculiarities of temper, self-importance, and an extreme view on political subjects, which required to be overlooked; but, on the other hand, Johnny possesses a ready wit, of a description rather beyond what might be expected from his station, and a turn for waggish repartee, to which it is often dangerous to rouse him; as, woe be to the man who offends Johnny, and comes under his lash."

On the following morning Mr. Halkett and Dr. Moore started for the moors, on reaching which they were most hospitably received by the Rev. Mr. Kettle, who was a fair specimen of the primitive old Presbyterian clergyman. He appeared to be upwards of fourscore, and looked the picture of health. He entered with spirit into their arrangements, and informed them that Johnny Havery could very well be spared at present from home, as in his peculiar calling he was thankful to say there was no want of his assistance—the parish for a long period having been unusually healthy, few if any deaths having occurred for months. "However," he added, "Johnny is never in want of a living, as he

is the barber of the village, can bleed, &c., and he is also in repute as a famous cow doctor. He is celebrated, too, for the compounding of certain mystic herbs, which are a *sure* remedy for all diseases of the stomach; he can, besides, repair a house clock, clean a watch, dress anglers' flies to suit the water and the day, break a pointer, and domesticate all descriptions of animals, having succeeded once in taming an otter. He can also put his hand to the plough at a pinch, although Johnny is not much given to manual labour. But I will send for him now, when you will learn the state of the river, &c."

Johnny very soon made his appearance. He was rather of diminutive stature, and slightly lame, supporting himself with a stout thorn staff. His expression of countenance was that of much shrewdness—it might be cunning; and he had a singular cast in one eye which conveyed something at once wily and comical.

"Gude mornin' to your nichtcaps, gentlemen," he said as he entered. "Ye'll aiblins be wantin' me to help ye in some strait or ither, or ye wadna hae fashed your heads to send for Johnny Havery."

"Be more respectful, John," said Mr. Kettle; "remember you are talking to gentlemen, who do not understand your uncouth manners as I do."

"We merely wanted to know from you, John," said Dr. Moore, "what state the river is in for fishing, and whether you would feel disposed to devote a few days in accompanying my friend, Mr. Halkett, who is come up for the purpose of enjoying the sport."

"Deed," replied Johnny, "ye couldna hae come at a better time, and I shall be glad to gie a' the help in my poer. I hae been watchin' particularly this week, and I expect a run o' grilse up the morn's mornin', when I hae nae doubt but we will manage to grup some o' them."

"Many thanks to you, John," said Mr. Halkett, "for your kind offer; and, as arles and an earnest how I may reward you for any trouble or inconvenience I may put you to, accept in the mean time of this trifle," placing a guinea in his hand.

Johnny seemed quite taken by surprise at this unlooked-for mark of generosity—gave a most expressive leer with his peculiar eye, and having previously subjected it to the cere-

mony of spitting on it for luck, respectfully thanked Mr. Halkett. He then put the coin, well wrapped up in paper, into his pocket, and made the somewhat mysterious remark—"There's anither prisoner for life."

Having settled for comfortable apartments in the village inn for Mr. Halkett, his parochial business obliged Dr. Moore to take his leave of him, with the promise to join him again in a few days. His servant was not long in arranging, for his master's comfort, all those little necessities they had brought with them that he had been accustomed to, and which, as they anticipated, could not be obtained at the village. The remainder of the evening was spent in overhauling all Mr. Halkett's fishing gear, which Johnny pronounced to be "very beautiful," and "nae doot cost a poore o' siller, and micht aiblins inveigle fool fish in oot-landish pairts; but here," said Johnny, "oor troots hae mair sense; thae gee-gaws are no worth a snuff o' tobacco for oor waters. But never mind, sir," he observed to Mr. Halkett; "I will sort ye a' richt the morn."

They then parted for the night, having arranged to meet, at a spot fixed on by Johnny, at six o'clock the following morning.

CHAPTER II.—THE SALMON STREAM.

WHEN Mr. Halkett, who had dressed himself in rather a light-grey coat, reached the place of appointment with his servant, they found Johnny Havery already waiting. "Noo, sir," said he, after the usual salutations, "the flees on this water change perhaps half a dozen times in the coorse o' a day, and so maun we oors, and the most fickle aye to dress is the early mornin's aye; but, before we dress the flees, you will, perhaps, obleege me by dressing yoursel' properly—so be so kind as send your flunkie hame wi' the coat ye hae on, instructin' him to bring you back a dark-coloured aye, as ye needna attempt to cast a line wi' ony chance o' success wi' the aye ye hae on."

This request was immediately complied with; when Johnny stepped down to the river side and caught a handful of

flies, from which, with the materials he had brought with him, he prepared the artificial one in a most artistic style, in an incredibly short space of time.

"Noo, sir," continued he, "I am not used to your gut-casting lines, but perhaps they may, if weel weet, answer the purpose. Noo, throw your hook very lichtly on the surface; but keep farther back—always face the sun, and never let your shadow fall upon the water; this is a great and grand secret in anglin', the importance of which few seem to understand. But, look! you hae hooked a yellow trout. Dinna hurry the puir fallow, gie him plenty o' time. Ye hae him sure enough; tak care, though, if ye jerk him that gate ye may chance to break your line, which the water has not sufficiently softened yet. Ye may land him noo," said Johnny, after the lapse of a few minutes, "by your haudin' his nose against the stream."

This hint proved effectual, as the trout immediately turned on his back, and he was brought ashore without difficulty. Mr. Halkett was very proud of his first capture; it proved to be a fine trout, about a pound and a half weight.

"Noo," said Johnny, "ye hae managed that ane first-rate, sir; try again."

On casting his line once more in a stream, which ran into a very deep pool, and which Johnny called the "Black Pot," he observed repeatedly an unusual gurgle on the water at a little distance from his hook.

"Stop, stop, sir!" cried Johnny in some excitement, "ye maun hae a fresh flee. Whisht, whisht! the grilse are here," he whispered; "let's a' keep back frae the water's edge," and, having dressed another hook, and overhauled all Mr. Halkett's tackle, to ascertain that it was suited for any emergency, he again directed him to try a particular part of the stream, and, on the third or fourth cast of his line, he called for Johnny's assistance, pointing out to him that his hook had caught hold of a rock. Johnny took hold of the rod, and had not held it for more than a minute, when he returned it to Mr. Halkett, and, in a suppressed tone of voice, exclaimed—"Be cool, you have a large *cock* saumon on your heuk; it must be ane of the stray spring fish that has only noo returned from the sea. Gie him his ain way as lang as ye can."

These words were not well uttered ere the fish, aroused

from his apparent stupor, made a fearful dash down the stream.

Spin round went with incredible velocity Mr. Halkett's pirl, until his line had nearly reached its termination; the fish then changed his course, and made a bound up the river.

"Keep him ticht—keep him ticht!" shouted Johnny. "He'll be back again presently, but continue windin' up your reel. Noo he has got into his auld berth—he'll no lie there lang. However," he said, after a minute or two had elapsed, "he seems determined to stop whar he is—gie him a tug or twa, sir, and force him out o' that," which being done, the fish dashed with a vengeance down the water again, and ran until he got to the full length of Mr. Halkett's line, who by this time, in following him, had rushed into the river to a considerable depth.

The fish seemed now in a sluggish state, and determined not to move from where he lay, under the cliff of a rock. Mr. Halkett pulled until his trouting-rod was nearly doubled, when Johnny cautioned him against straining the line further, by saying—

"Let him tak his fill o't for a wee, sir—he'll sune tire o' that; but gie him nae rest—wind your reel up to as near him as you can; and, if he should tak the stream again, tak care o' your fittin', as 'tis no very safe farther down."

However, the precaution was unnecessary, as the fish came bounding from beneath the rock where he had been lying, made a dash forward, and then a spring of ten or twelve feet out of the water.

"Twenty punds wecht," cried Johnny, "if he's an unce, and a clean fish to boot! Tak care, sir, what you're aboot; dinna hurry yoursel', but keep him ticht—you'll sune tire him noo. Faith, he's a plucky ane, though," continued Johnny, roused up to the highest pitch of excitement; "you'll hae some wark wi' him yet;" and, as he spoke, down the water again went the fish, apparently more lively than ever, endeavouring to disentangle himself of the hook by repeated springs, tossings, and plunges, like a maddened devil on the chafing surge of the current. Bang, bang—splash, splash—he went; but Johnny's address to it (from his experience) made the result conclusive.

"It's nae use," he said, "your noo tryin', freen', for you're a gone poot to a' intents and purposes;" and, shortly

after this sage remark, the fish turned upon his back, evidently sickened.

"Now," said Mr. Halkett, "I suppose I may try and land him?"

"You *may*," said Johnny; "but be very cautious, as a cock saumon is a cunnin' chiel."

Johnny's advice did not appear unnecessary, as the fish when near the shore again righted, and made for the current. In ten minutes longer, however, he lay panting on the bank—his capture having taken about forty-five minutes to accomplish. He was a beautifully formed fish, and weighed, according to Johnny's steelyards, about nineteen pounds and a half, being of that breed known as the "spring fish," the most delicate of all the salmon tribe—the spawn of which many suppose, and I am convinced is, the pretty little *par* with which the rivers are teeming during the summer months.

The great excitement attending the capture had prevented Mr. Halkett from feeling the fatigue he had undergone during the struggle; but Johnny recommended a bumper of brandy *round*, from what he called "the flunkey's pocket pistol," which had the effect of preventing any bad consequences from his repeated plunges into the water.

The cheers that followed the taking, with trouting tackle, such a fish at such a day in the year, brought numbers of the villagers to the spot, who acknowledged that they never had heard of such a feat being performed during the number of years they had lived near the water; and they returned in triumph to the village, led by Johnny Havery, staff in hand, and the salmon ostentatiously displayed on his shoulder. A general holiday was the consequence during the remainder of the day in the village, when all were regaled by Johnny, at Mr. Halkett's expense, with a good allowance of beer, whisky, &c.

Mr. Halkett continued on the moors, enjoying himself for two or three days, during which time Johnny Havery was his constant attendant on his fishing excursions, from which they always returned with a well-filled creel. Johnny, as he became more familiar, began to display a little of his ready wit; and, when opportunity offered, would open up an occasional vein of sarcasm. Whether from a spirit of mischief or not never transpired, but Johnny one evening, in the face of his knowledge that the proprietor was most tenacious of

unauthorized persons intruding on his lands, and, apparently from ignorance, trespassed considerably beyond the boundary. The owner, a very tall, austere-looking man, came up and challenged them, evidently much excited. Mr. Halkett apologized, and mentioned that he was a stranger, and his crossing "the march" was from his entire ignorance of the ground.

"That scoundrel, Havery," said the gentleman, "knows the boundary of our lands well, and he ought to have directed you."

"However, sir," said Mr. Halkett, "as you have suffered no damage from our intrusion, the only reparation that I have it in my power to make is, to immediately leave your land;" and, taking off his hat, wished him a good-evening.

"Who is this most uncivil person, Johnny?" asked Mr. Halkett.

"Atweel, sir," replied Johnny, "he's nae great shakes wi' a' his airs and graces; the county sent him to Lunnon last spring wi' some sort o' paper to gie to the king. When he went awa' he was plain maister, and when he cam back he ca'ed himsel' Sir Harry Cairns. He has an only son, who, whenever he can get in his tongue, maun be haverin' and tawkin', and an awfu' fule they tell me he maks o' himsel' when he speaks at the public meetings."

Whilst trudging homewards, Johnny seemed to be ruminating on some very important subject: he at last broke silence by addressing Mr. Halkett:—

"Can you tell me, sir, how Sir Harry Cairns is like a winter in Siberia?"

"Really, Johnny, with all my ingenuity I cannot."

"Because, sir, he's a lang knight, and his son never shines."

Johnny had an inexhaustible source of amusement in the recital of traditions in connection with the locality in which he had been born and bred; with such he used to amuse Mr. Halkett, when at their luncheon by the river side. Amongst other incidents he distinctly remembered the circumstance of Paul Jones attempting to land on the coast, and burn the town of K——, and one day favoured Mr. Halkett with a song composed on the subject. This very classical effusion, which was attributed to himself, and became a most popular melody with all the peasantry for many years, I shall endea-

your to remember; but it will be difficult to give the stirring effect, or apply the emphasis on particular words in the manner peculiar to Johnny. It ran thus—

“ You’ve heard of Paul Jones, have you not, have you not?
 You’ve heard of one Paul Jones, have you not?
 He was a bold outlaw, for he join’d America.
 Such a thief we never saw, did we not, did we not?
 Such a thief we never saw, did we not?
 He was a bold outlaw, was he not, was he not?
 He was a bold outlaw, was he not?
 He was a bold outlaw, for he went to Earl Selkirk’s ha’,
 And stole plate and jewels a’, did he not, did he not?
 And stole plate and jewels a’, did he not?
 He was a murderer, was he not, was he not?
 He was a murderer, was he not?
 He was a murderer, for he slew his own carpenter,
 All in this bluidy war, did he not, did he not?
 All in this bluidy war, did he not? ”

As Dr. Moore was not to join Mr. Halkett until the Monday, the latter attended the parish church on the Sunday; but Johnny prepared him before he went not to expect a great amount of instruction from Mr. Kettle, “as,” he said, “he was but a puir han’ at the preachin’.”

When Mr. Kettle appeared at the foot of the pulpit stairs on this occasion, Johnny inquired respectfully after the state of his health,—

“Indeed, John,” he replied, “I am far from weel this mornin’—I am sairly plagued with that nasty bile, ye ken.”

After the service and the sermon, which latter was a very indifferent one, Johnny again accosted him with—“How do ye fin’ yoursel’ now, sir?”

“Why, Johnny, the preachin’, I think, has done me gude—I feel considerably better.”

“Nae wunner, sir,” returned Johnny, with one of his cunning leers, “for ye hae putten a great deal o’ blether aff your stamick!”

“You are an incorrigible scoundrel!” said Mr. Kettle; “go about your business, sir.”

Johnny was very tenacious of any infringement of his dignity. One Sunday Mr. Kettle was addressing his parishioners as to the propriety of their more regular attendance at church, and apostrophized on the subject by saying—“There’s Johnny Havery, he’s my dog, and brings my sheep and lambs to the fold.” Johnny’s indignation was

roused at what he conceived this unwarrantable remark, looked up to the pulpit, and exclaimed—

“I’m nane o’ yer dug, sir!”

“I was only speaking mystically,” said Mr. Kettle.

“’Deed, sir,” retorted Johnny, “I think ye’re tawkin’ very mischievously.”

The church, which could not boast of much architectural excellence, was a long strip of building, with two wide doors, one at each end, which, during the hot weather, were left open at the time of the service, to promote the more free circulation of fresh air. Johnny, being the chief parochial official, occupied a detached seat in the long passage facing the pulpit. He had been in the habit of indulging in a *siesta* during the afternoon service, until a casualty occurred which put a stop to his enjoyment of this luxury.

A large tame goat, from the adjoining moor, often condescended, by way of recreation, to walk with great state and solemnity through the church, from one door to the other. On one of these occasions, Johnny was enjoying his usual nap, and, as was customary with him, continually giving somnolent nods with his head; when the animal approached him, it naturally concluded that this movement must be a declaration of war, and accordingly attacked the unconscious Johnny in a most terrific manner. He was thrown from his equilibrium, tossed heels over head from his seat, alighting, and causing considerable damage, in the centre of the parochial charity school, composed of a large number of small boys and girls, whose screams, from the injuries they sustained, were loud and long. The service was so completely interrupted, and the confusion so great, that Mr. Kettle thought it most prudent, under the circumstances, to pronounce the blessing and dismiss the congregation.

I accompanied Dr. Moore to the mountains as arranged, taking with us a hamper of refreshments, which proved most acceptable. Mr. Halkett had much to tell us, but more particularly his great achievement in the capture of the fine salmon; which, he informed us, he had sent as a present to his correspondents in London. He was much improved since we parted both in health and spirits; and we found him quite domesticated in the village, every one seeming more disposed than another to contribute to his amusement.

After enjoying a hearty moorland breakfast, and thinking of making preparations for our day's sport, Johnny Havery appeared, and, without much pressing, began to make an onslaught on the eatables on the table before him, washing all down with a hearty dram; and, having finished, remarked—"I think, Mr. Halkett, I somehow aye come in here at crowdy time."

All our tackle then underwent Johnny's usual scrutiny; the greatest portion of which he condemned. However, in the face of this discouragement (being impatient for the sport), off we started. We found Johnny's prediction realized this morning—the advent of the grilse. Dr. Moore had the first luck; he killed, after about twenty minutes' work, a fine new run fish, weighing six and a half pounds; whilst he was engaged, Mr. Halkett had also one in play, which was rather a more difficult job, as the greedy fellow had missed the gulp of the hook, but it had caught fast hold under his eye, at the top of the gills. Johnny's advice was now in requisition; he said it was difficult how to advise, for, as he appeared a strong fish, he might by a sudden spring, tear away the hook, or get under a rock and *tak the sulks*; from which there would be a risk of cutting the line. Johnny, therefore, evidently intended to have recourse to strategy of some kind in this difficult case.

"Keep him in play," he added, "and ticht by the head, but not too ticht, and bring him as near the bank as you can."

Mr. Halkett implicitly followed his directions for fully half an hour, and had managed to bring his fish about three yards from the land, when Johnny dashed into the water and seized it in his arms; he, however, missed his footing, and fell over head and ears in the stream, and, for a minute or two, it became questionable whether Johnny or the salmon were in the greatest peril. He however eventually scrambled to the shore with his struggling armful; and, after having given it one or two knocks on the head, which, from the expression of his peculiar eye, was not done in the best of tempers, he tossed the fish on the ground, and exclaimed—"There, freend, you'll no play me that trick again, I think!" and a good bumper of whisky made him all right again. The day was pretty far advanced ere I had any luck; however, fortune at last took a turn in my favour, and

I became equally successful with the others. Ere we finished for the day, we had killed nine fine young salmon amongst us, averaging about ten pounds weight.

The keen bracing mountain air, and the excitement of the sport, put us all into high spirits, and sharpened our appetites for dinner, which was a "rough spread" on a spot of heather selected by Johnny, and adjacent to a small spring, which he called the "physic well;" the water from which was not, however, in much request, as we preferred the old port and madeira that we had brought with us; whilst the multitudes that had congregated around us were regaled, under the superintendence of Johnny, with as much as they could eat, followed by drams of whisky, and ale from a cask of the village home-brewed.

As we had made arrangements for another visit, I formally appointed Johnny sole conservator of the river, and also assistant protector of the game on a small salary, a preferment for which Johnny said he had not words to express his appreciation; and, turning round, addressed the multitude as follows—

"Now, do ye hear that? I tak ye a' to witness, that the laird has gi'en me full powers to punish all offenders; so, if ever I catch ony o' ye drivin' a leester, castin' a line, trowlin' or neivin' a troot in the water, or girniu' a muirfule or hare, ye need expect naething else but the most condign punishment at my hands; so hie ye hame ilka ane o' ye, and publish this to all and sundry."

We had ordered our conveyances to be brought to us at the place where we had pitched our tent, by reason of the village being some miles nearer home; and, on our way to the town, Mr. Halkett expressed himself most warmly to us for the splendid amusement we had afforded him, and the general kindness with which he had been received.

On the following day he left for London, with the promise to return to us again in a week or two, and mentioned that, after due reflection, he had made up his mind, if possible, to purchase an estate in the neighbourhood, and settle amongst us. His accessible manner and liberality, even for the short time he was amongst us, had gained him the respect and esteem of all the peasantry in the neighbourhood: in this Johnny Havery participated, as, a day or two after Mr. Halkett's departure, I observed that ten guineas had been

placed to the credit of his account, which, in deposits, had accumulated to a very considerable sum, for Johnny was a careful man.

In a week or two I received a letter from Mr. Halkett, informing me of his intention to return to us, and reminding me of my promise to give him "The Grove" as a residence; and if I was still of the same mind, of which he said he had little doubt, he requested that I would be so kind as immediately to proceed with any necessary repairs and improvements that both the house and the grounds might require, and to spare no expense in doing so, whilst he would send to the adjoining port of K—— the necessary furniture, with a large quantity of Indian and Chinese cabinets, &c., which were stored in London. He requested also to know the number, dimensions, and character of the rooms.

The improvements at "The Grove" immediately commenced under my directions and superintendence, and, when finished, it was admitted to be a most enchanting spot. The bowers, grottoes, dark walks, and little waterfalls, were all restored and dressed up; whilst the interior of the house, as it appeared with its appropriate furniture, surpassed in beauty all Mr. Halkett's expectations when he returned in a few weeks and took possession. Dr. and Mrs. Moore were present to receive him, and I, with my wife and daughters, also joined the party, to participate in the day's festivities at this happy "home heating."

Mr. Halkett, amongst other things, had sent down a fine collection of rare and valuable pictures, which now adorned the walls of "The Grove," some of them of a most charming character; and in the course of the evening they afforded us great delight in their inspection, but one in particular more than the rest attracted our attention—it was the full length portrait of a young lady of surpassing beauty, which no one could gaze on without being struck with its loveliness. Mrs. Moore inquired of Mr. Halkett if it was a portrait, or, as might be supposed from its high finish, a fancy picture? He was silent for a few minutes, when he replied—"Alas! my dear Mrs. Moore, this is no sketch of the imagination," and, after another short pause, he in a faltering and mournful tone of voice observed—"It is the portrait of my late beloved and much lamented wife, whose loss I can never cease to deplore. It is seldom that I allow my mind to dwell on the

suffering and anguish that I have endured during the latter portion of my life. The thoughts of her for many years often used to drive me nearly to distraction ; but time, that great physician of the soul, has wrought wonders upon me, and my heart is now to a certain extent lulled and seared. Still my feelings, although calmed and mellowed, are not the less sensitive ; but I can now manage to look back on events such as have rarely fallen to the lot of man, and she, whose loss has been for such a long term of years the constant theme of my lamentations, I have the consolation in the conviction that she is now an angel of light, looking down with pity upon me, and sympathizing with my grief." Mrs. Moore apologized in having inadvertently torn open his wounds ; but he replied in a cheerful tone of voice, that he was rather glad that she had done so, as he felt himself in better nerve that evening than he had been for a long time, and it would afford him a good opportunity of giving his kind friends a short narrative of his life, which, from their warm and ingenuous reception of him, a total stranger, he felt himself bound to lose no time in doing, and thus began :—

CHAPTER III.—THE NABOB'S TRUST.

My father was a merchant of considerable eminence in London. He married very early in life, but had not much happiness in his connubial state, as he lost my dear mother after she had given birth to her third child, all of whom died excepting myself (the eldest) whilst in their teens, from that scourge of our land, consumption. I was also a very delicate youth, which circumstance gave my father, who was much attached to me, *now* his only child, great anxiety ; and it being the opinion of the physicians, that my removal to a warm climate was the only chance of saving my life, I was sent out to an uncle, a brother of my mother's, who had been many years employed in the company's service, but who now was settled as a banker in Calcutta, and said to be very rich. Having previously obtained a cadetship, I sailed in one of the company's ships. The parting with my father was a most affecting one ; he had the impression that we were never again to meet, and this proved the case, as he

died within twelve months after our separation, and at whose death I became heir to a considerable property.

On my arrival at Calcutta, I was received in *his* peculiar manner, by my uncle, with much kindness; but neither his habits nor personal appearance were calculated to give a favourable impression to a youth who from infancy had been much caressed, and had been accustomed to the mildness and suavity of manner which had been the characteristic of my father. It was not therefore with regret (when the order came for me to join my regiment) that I prepared for my departure to the interior; as, although my uncle was indirectly kind and affectionate, still, his constantly crotchety temper, arising from a long and continued state of indifferent health, made the life I led in his society irksome in the extreme; besides, I was most anxious to embark in active service, and to witness and engage in some of those scenes of which I had heard so much. When I came, however, to take my leave of my uncle, he seemed much distressed to part with me.

"Can't you stop where you are?" he said; "throw up your commission and remain, and join me in business; I will be a father to you. I know that my manners and habits are not such as to engage the feelings and encourage the buoyancy of a youthful spirit, still you will find me improve on better acquaintance. I am advanced in life, with a shattered constitution. Remain with me, I entreat you; as in the common course of nature I cannot live long, and you will succeed to my already large fortune."

I had, however, formed my plans, in my desire to see active service. I communicated them very candidly to my uncle, and besought him to allow me to take my course. Sir David Baird, having driven Tippoo into his stronghold, and Sir Arthur Wellesley having also joined our forces, the siege would be hot work; and I promised to return at the conclusion of the war.

"Well," he said, "as you appear determined, I will not further impede you; you are a brave boy, and I pray God to protect you."

Seringapatam was certainly a brilliant affair. I was in the very heat of the battle, and amongst the first to enter the fortress, and afterwards to discover the mangled body of the miscreant, Tippoo Sultan. About the end of the engagement, I received a wound in my left side, the ball having

lodged in the fleshy part of my chest, and severing the cartilage near the region of the heart. The great mortality of the regiment was such, that after the engagement I found myself entitled to a captaincy—the commission for which Sir David presented me with personally, and, at the same time, complimented me on the brave manner I had signalized myself during the siege. In a short time, after making every effort to remain, I found that I was losing strength, and felt compelled to return invalided to Calcutta. My uncle, who had heard of the compliment that had been paid to me by the commander-in-chief, had much pride in welcoming me again to his house, and, shortly after my joining him, I was obliged to undergo the most dangerous and painful operation of extracting the ball. However, I had nerved my mind to bear the suffering, and stood it so well that it raised me a hundredfold in his estimation. I became a confirmed favourite—so much so, that he had little happiness except in my society; and he in a short time prevailed upon me to dispose of my commission, and gave me a share in his very lucrative and extensive business.

After the lapse of three years, my dear old uncle died very suddenly, leaving me sole heir to the whole amount of his immense fortune. My health had suffered very much from the effects of my wound and the climate; so, after the lapse of some years, as I had taken a partner in whom I had the most implicit trust, I determined to return to dear old England, an earnest desire for which had long haunted me.

“Breathes there the man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said—
This is my own, my native land:
Whose heart within him ne’er hath burn’d,
As home his footsteps he hath turn’d
From wandering on a foreign strand?”

Amongst the many passengers in one of those magnificent ships belonging to the company in which I embarked, was an old friend of my uncle’s, General T——, a rough old soldier. He took a great fancy to me, and we shortly became most intimate friends. He was accompanied by his only daughter, Caroline, whose mother had died many years previously, and left her in charge of her father, who had taken her with him during all the campaigns in which he had been engaged, and for whom he had a romantic attachment. We were necessarily very much together—the gene-

ral and I spending our evenings generally at chess ; Caroline, who appeared only to have seen about eighteen summers, I for a long time regarded as a mere child, and treated her as such. She had, like myself, been in delicate health ; but I remarked she improved very much during the early part of our long voyage, in a month or two becoming a remarkably fine woman, perfectly faultless in form and feature. In short, I will not attempt to describe her to you, nor could any effort of mine do justice to the charms of this peerless creature. This portrait (pointing to the picture) will give you some idea of what she was like about two years after our marriage. The change of air had been the means of irritating my wound—so much so, that the doctor recommended me to confine myself in quietness for a few days to my cabin ; and it so happened that the general was laid up at the same time with a slight inflammatory attack. Caroline attended both her father and myself during our indisposition, dividing her constant attentions between us. She seemed to anticipate all our wants, and would not allow any hand but her own to give me even a cup of water. Her kindnesses to me were unwearied ; and, in her solicitude for my recovery, she evinced the most tender and disinterested feeling, and, whilst dressing my wound, displayed the most refined, benevolent, and maidenly delicacy.

When we had recovered, Carry (as she had during my illness requested me to call her) seldom joined us, as she was wont to do, in our walks. Her father used to scold her, and call her a little lazy minx, for not coming more upon deck, and enjoying the sweet breezes and the refreshing scent of vegetation, which we imagined we felt now wafted to us from the land. She used to blush deeply without making any excuse. I recommended early rising to her, and tried to induce her to do so by creating every amusement that I could imagine. I began to experience an unusual feeling of a sad blank in our society, and became dissatisfied and disconcerted if she was not with us at the moment I expected her. When she did appear, she seemed to me altered, reserved, and retiring in her manner, her colour constantly changing when I addressed her.

I one day took the opportunity of remarking this unaccountable alteration in her to the general, and hoped that I had not in any way offended her.

"Never mind her," he said; "girls at her age often take extraordinary tantrums, for which they could not give you an explanation were you to ask them."

However, I determined that I would have my mind relieved by herself on the subject; and, for this purpose, a favourable opportunity presented itself in a few days.

On coming upon deck one morning, I found that Caroline had got the start of me. The weather was cold and raw, and she appeared to be very thinly dressed. I therefore hurried back to the cabin for a thick shawl I had seen her wear, and, following her in her walk, I, unperceived, placed it gently upon her shoulders; she turned round in surprise, and, when she discovered me, she seemed much agitated, blushing deeply, and then turning very pale. She gave me a look which I have never forgotten—it was an expression of subdued tenderness; and, in accents of surpassing sweetness, in little more than a whisper, she thanked me for my considerate kindness.

"Miss T——," I then said, "it has lately given me an indescribable amount of pain to observe the sudden change in your manner towards me, were it for no other cause than the debt of gratitude that I have contracted to you. I should conceive myself the vilest and most ungrateful of beings could I be guilty of offending, or in any way giving you one moment's uneasiness. If I have inadvertently done so, I entreat your pardon and forgiveness, and I shall consider no amount of suffering or sacrifice great enough to retain your favourable opinion, which to me appears, by some unaccountable means, I have lost; and my sorrow for which I have not words to express. May I hope, therefore, that I may again be restored to your favour and good opinion, when no act or word of mine shall ever again place in peril that which I so highly value?"

Caroline, during the time I was addressing her, had turned her head from me—she had burst into tears; and having made some trifling excuse, of feeling the cold air of the morning too much for her, suddenly retired to her cabin, leaving me to ruminate on such strange conduct, and to solve at my leisure what I conceived to be an inscrutable mystery. When the general came upon deck, I noticed that he was not in his usual spirits.

"Confound these women!" he said; "one does not know

how to manage them. That girl of mine seems falling back into her old state of delicate health ; her maid has just told me that she has this morning had a violent fit of hysterics."

I expressed my extreme distress to hear of Miss T——'s indisposition ; but, as we were now near the end of our voyage, I hoped that she would recover her health when quietly settled in London, surrounded by sympathizing friends, and relieved from the turmoil and bustle to which she had been lately subjected.

When we landed, the general expressed himself in the warmest terms of the pleasure he had enjoyed in my society, and hoped that nothing should ever interrupt a friendship which had been formed so accidentally and pleasantly. I impressed upon him that the feeling was fully reciprocated by myself, and requested an early call from him at the "Clarendon," where, in the mean time, I intended to take up my abode. He gave me his address in return, at the residence of his sister, Lady B——, in Portland Place, where he hoped I would not fail to visit him ; and he at the same time told me that Caroline, with her maid, and a portion of their things, had already gone ashore, leaving her regards to me, whilst he intended to remain and superintend the landing of their heavy luggage.

I felt this last slight on the part of Caroline most deeply ; and, when left alone in my hotel, I began to analyse my feelings, and came to the conclusion that she had obtained the entire possession of my heart ; and, from the previously impaired state of my health, and the constant thoughts of what might prove the result of my now violent passion, I was seized with a sudden and alarming illness. My physician did not know what to think of my state, but recommended, when I had somewhat recovered, society and generous living. I wrote to General T——, informing him of my illness as an excuse for my not having visited him ; and on the following morning he, in his rough manner, came bustling into my room.

"Hullo !" he cried, "what is the matter—what has happened ? You are a pretty pair, aren't you ? there's my Carry, who has been as ill as you, with the addition of nearly crying herself to death. My opinion is, that you would doctor each other better than all the physicians in London."

I expressed my extreme vexation to hear of Miss T——'s illness, and suggested the idea that it might arise from, perhaps, some attachment of which he was not aware.

"Attachment be hanged!" said he. "There is no doubt about it; she is in love—over head and ears in love; and, what's more, I'll be shot if I don't think it is with yourself. Now, *there*; it's out! Good-morning to you—come and see us." And he vanished, giving the door a bang after him which resounded over the whole house.

My sensations at this *dénouement* of the general's can be more easily imagined than described. I was seized with a frenzy of conflicting feelings of rapture, difficulty, and self-reproach. I made every effort to compose myself, and, if possible, for a time tried to exclude from my memory the lovely form of Caroline T——; but I found in this, as in every other instance, that to endeavour to forget any one is the certain way to think of nothing else.

Idiot—dolt—fool! I thought that I was, not to have perceived that the increasing affection of my dearest Carry more than kept pace with my own. Now it was, for the first time, that I saw and understood the cause of her supposed slights of me—her embarrassment when we met, and the illness occasioned, doubtless, from my apparent neglect of her; all of which circumstances tended, on reflection, the more to inflame my passion, and to increase for her my respect and esteem. When the general entered, I was reclining in a state of languor on the sofa, in my dressing-gown, and then found it an effort to rise and meet him; now I was walking at a rapid pace around the room, forming all sorts of resolutions—many of them of the most absurd description. At last I determined, weak and exhausted as I was, to lose not a moment in finding my way to Portland Place. I therefore rang for my servant to assist me at my toilet, to whom after communicating my intentions, and dressing myself with more than my usual care, I ordered my carriage immediately to the door. The man seemed much distressed at being compelled to execute such instructions, and which I had to repeat to him ere he left the room.

I had finished dressing, and was about taking my departure, when the doctor met me at the door, Henry, my servant, as I afterwards learned, in much alarm at my appearance and manner, having communicated with him.

"Mr. Halkett," said the doctor, addressing me, "what is the meaning of this? I hope you are not so mad as to think of leaving your hotel in your present state of health; 'tis, I assure you, as much as your life is worth; therefore, do be prevailed upon to remain at home."

"That is impossible," I replied, "as I have suddenly received a most important call, which requires my immediate presence in Portland Place."

"It is out of the question that you can make such an effort," he returned, "without incurring the greatest risk. I have occasion to be in that neighbourhood immediately, and shall be glad to convey any message that you will instruct me with; but upon no account venture out to-day."

At last he prevailed upon me to remain at home; and I wrote a note to General T——, which the doctor personally delivered, explaining how I had been prevented from visiting him, and describing the feelings his communication of the morning had excited in me—at the same time, requesting particularly that he would favour me with a call in the course of the day. When the general, in his kindness of heart, without much loss of time afforded me this interview, I, in a few words, explained to him the state of my heart in regard to Caroline, and that I had not known the extent of my attachment until we were separated, and I had heard of her illness.

"I saw from the first," he exclaimed, "what was going on betwixt you, and knew better how it would end than you seemed to be aware yourselves; and I candidly tell you, that I was much pleased to observe that Carry had shown such discrimination in making the selection she has done, amongst the many suitors that surrounded her. However, on my return, I shall inform her what you have expressed to me, which, I have little doubt, will tend to her immediate recovery; and this interview, I know also, will bring your mind to that equanimity which will, besides, contribute to the restoration of your health also."

I promised in three days to dine at Portland Place, when I hoped to find Miss T—— in as good health as I then expected to be myself. In the mean time, I seized my pen and wrote her a few impassioned lines preparatory to the first interview, at which we should exchange our expressions of mutual and indelible attachment.

Whether it arose from the lassitude consequent on my illness, or the excitement and agitation at the prospect of meeting her, who had so long absorbed my whole thoughts, I know not; but when the carriage stopped at Portland Place at the time appointed, I was seized with an overpowering feeling of anxiety and solicitude, from which I found some difficulty in rallying myself; 'ere, however, I reached the door of the drawing-room, I had completely recovered.

I found Caroline, though delicate, looking more beautiful than ever. She was seated on a sofa, with Lady B—— by her side. She met me with the most perfect composure; and, with a sweet smile, expressed the great anxiety she had suffered on hearing of my illness, which was increased from the feeling of the impression she feared I must have formed, of her leaving the ship without giving me even a parting look or word: she observed, that *she* had suffered sufficiently from that, and what must have appeared to me her inexplicable conduct and manner, but which, she had learned from her kind father, had been explained to me. I then tried to impress upon her what great agony of mind I had endured when informed of her indisposition; and, whilst we were exchanging those warm expressions of mutual sympathy, Lady B—— charitably left the room. I then seized the happy moment, and gave free vent to all the fond outpourings of my soul. In return, she whispered in my ear how long and ardently she had loved me. I was now one of the happiest of men. She knew the sincerity of my heart, and appreciated my protestations of eternal love, which neither time nor circumstance could ever efface. She was locked in my arms in a fond embrace, her head resting on my bosom, when the door suddenly opened, and the general entered.

"Well," he cried, "wonders in this world never cease! This bangs every amazement that I could possibly have imagined. Are you not a most extraordinary couple? Here I find you one day totally estranged, and the next indulging in all the ecstasies of love and affection. But, no matter; it would appear that you have at last brought things to a crisis."

"Oh, my dearest papa!" cried Caroline, springing from the sofa, and sinking on her knees at his feet, in which attitude I unconsciously joined, whilst she burst into tears and sobbed aloud.

"Well, well!" said the general in evident emotion; "God bless you! God bless you!" and, when we arose, he was returning his handkerchief from his eyes quickly to his pocket.

At the urgent desire of Lady B——, but contrary to the wish of either my dearest Caroline or myself, after the lapse of a few months, our marriage was celebrated in St. George's, Hanover Square. It was in the height of the London season, and a greater display of beauty and fashion had seldom been witnessed. Immediately after the ceremony we started for the continent, where we kept travelling about for nearly two months.

On our return, I took and furnished a magnificent house in Portman Square, which we occupied for four years. I will not detail—indeed, I can scarcely trust myself to narrate—the unalloyed happiness which during that period we enjoyed. If perfect bliss (as far as this world could afford) was ever vouchsafed to mortals, it was to us.

We had three lovely children—two boys and a girl—born to us; "to bind us in our loves and comfort us in our afflictions." The girl was the image of her mother.

"Still o'er these scenes my memory wakes,
And fondly broods with miser care;
Time but the impression stronger makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear."

I now approach, continued Mr. Halkett, that portion of my history which drove me from the highest pinnacle of happiness and bliss to the very abyss of misery and despair.

In the summer of 18—, for the sake of the children (the state of whose health had given us some uneasiness for a length of time), I rented a beautiful mansion in a most enchanting situation for the season in Surrey, where we lived entirely to and for ourselves. Our greatest source of amusement was almost daily excursions to those places most attractive around where we resided. I had some good fishing and shooting ground; to enjoy which I used often to leave my wife for a few hours, whilst she amused herself driving about in an open carriage with the children. I had presented her with a couple of beautiful ponies and a light low phaeton, of which she was very proud, and which I had taught her to drive herself. One day, after my leaving her, she started, with all the children, for the purpose of visiting

the family of a nobleman who resided three miles from us. She had not proceeded far, when the ponies, which had had very little exercise for a week, shied at something on passing through the turnpike, and broke off at full speed, my dearest wife losing all control both of herself and them. The servant from behind made every effort to arrest their progress ; but the rapid sound of *his* horse's feet tended the more to accelerate their speed. At the turn of the road there was a narrow bridge which they must cross ; and against the corner of this the phaeton was dashed in pieces, throwing its precious load with fearful violence upon the road. I had witnessed part of this awful scene from a distance ; and, on reaching the spot, the first doleful sight that met my view was the mangled corpse of that lovely form, in which was centred all my earthly happiness, and who, with my eldest boy, who only lived a few hours, never again uttered a word. Several months were a complete blank in my existence. I cannot recall to my remembrance, during that period, a single event or occurrence. I was overwhelmed with grief and despair. My little girl was the only object that afforded me any relief, and over whom I used to weep like a child for hours. I will not enlarge upon this truly dreadful period of my life ; suffice it to say, that I gradually recovered partially my strength of body, although my spirit was all but broken. My medical man recommended a change of scene, and I went to the south of France, where I remained for nearly twelve months—my girl being my only companion—having left my boy in charge of Lady B——.

When I returned, I found that my dear little Henry had been drooping for some months, which the general had not communicated to me ; and, in the spring of the year, this sweet bud was blighted, and I, in renewed sorrow, consigned him to the cold grave beside his mother.

England had now no attractions for me ; and, as the delicate appearance of my dear girl (my only tie to life), excited my extreme solicitude, I was advised to remove her to a warm climate ; so, after arranging my affairs in this country, I again sailed for India, in the hope that the change would benefit her, and the occupation of my mind again in business possibly assist in removing the depression of my spirits.

My poor girl, however, ere we had proceeded far on our voyage, gradually sunk, so much so that I found it neces-

sary to land her at Madeira ; and in a few weeks I was doomed to leave her, my last and only hope, entombed in a land of strangers.

"I have little more to add," said Mr. Halkett, "to my sad—sad story. I returned to Calcutta, and devoted myself entirely to business. Our firm had been most successful in my absence, and wealth flowed in upon me.

"Fifteen years had elapsed since I returned to India ; and, as I felt some indications of old age approaching, I determined again to come to England, and devote the remainder of my life in charitable acts, which my overgrown fortune enables me to indulge in, in the land of my birth.

"Lady B—— and the good old general did not long survive my dear wife ; and I now, in thankfulness to the Giver of every good gift, look upon myself as a living miracle.

"You know the rest of my story. My intention is, in this secluded spot, away from the bustle of the world, to live in retirement for the remainder of my days ; for, as we advance in life, our interests and enjoyments, to a great extent, cease to fascinate ; indeed, it would be unfortunate were it otherwise, not only because the senses decay, but because those same amusements and scenes which used to attract, and were so replete with wonder to us in our youth, have been so often witnessed, that they in time cause those wisely-ordered revolutions of human opinion, which gives serenity to old age.

"One of my principal engagements will be, the employment and most judicious disposal of my immense wealth ; and for this purpose I cannot, I am sure, have better advice and counsel than from you, my kind friends. In the mean time, Mr. G—— (addressing me), I have ordered a considerable sum to be transferred, and an account opened with your establishment, in the event of my being so fortunate as to meet with an estate on which to invest it in this district ; and, as I intend that you shall have the entire management of my affairs, I should be glad if you would devote an early day to me, that I may explain to you the position and nature of my property. Don't, however, imagine that my society will prove a damper on your social intercourse with me, or that I shall in any way impede your innocent amusement ; on the contrary, you will find that, when roused, I can still participate in them with you, retaining yet a considerable

portion of the effervescence of my youth. We must have another day or two at salmon-fishing before we think of looking to our dogs and shooting-tackle, preparatory to our attack upon the grouse and blackcock on the twelfth of August, when, I am informed, you have an annual shooting party.

"By the way," he said, "I wish you would lease me a piece of land upon which I could build a shooting and fishing box on the moor." This request I most cordially granted, leaving Mr. Halkett to select the spot he most fancied on his next visit, which was done; and in a few weeks, by the aid of numerous workmen, gardeners, &c., &c., a lovely cottage, surrounded by flowers and evergreens, sprung up like magic.

We found that the management of Mr. Halkett's affairs caused a considerable increase in our business; his investments were most extensive and varied, principally in the government stocks, in which I had an unlimited power to operate upon for his interest, according to my judgment; and in these transactions I was generally fortunate.

"The Grove" was about an equal distance from Dr. Moore's manse as it was from my house, so that they exchanged almost daily visits.

Mr. Halkett, by his influence, obtained a most excellent appointment in the civil service in India for Charles Moore, the doctor's eldest son, whom he fitted out in the most liberal manner.

CHAPTER IV.—THE MOORS.

"THIS is a vale of tears and blood," was the remark of a celebrated divine. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness;" and I have little doubt but that Mr. Halkett, from his amiability of character, concealed from us what could not fail to have been a deeply-rooted grief. Action is momentary—the motion of a muscle this way or that; but suffering is long, obscure, and infinite. Still there are many sweet alleviations of human agony which nature calls for, and life not unfrequently furnishes, "which should accompany old age, as honour, love, obedience, troops of friends," &c.

Great were the preparations for the twelfth of August.

My gamekeeper, Andrew Greer, had been breaking the dogs all the summer, accompanied by his new assistant, Johnny Havery, who called it "teaching the young idea how to shoot."

On the eleventh, our hunting friends had all assembled. The party was composed of a mixture of very opposite characters.

First, we had our friend, Sir Walter M——, my partner from the castle, who had been a good shot in his day, and maintained that he had as much travel in him yet as ever he had. Then there was Mr. Halkett, who said he had been in training for weeks, and was in first-rate shooting trim. There was also my old and valued sporting friend, Captain M'Cabe, with his favourite dog Dido—a bachelor, a *bon vivant*, and a universal favourite, celebrated for his prowess and success in the field. He was a gentleman in feeling and manners, an accomplished table man, in the indulgence of which he was not particularly noted for abstinence, never having been known to flinch from his bottle, of which his face gave ample indications; so much so, that it was alleged that, if a pin were stuck in his nose, port-wine would spurt from it instead of blood. He was brimful of sporting anecdotes, and on this account was at all times a most acceptable social companion; besides, he possessed a patent for punch-brewing, sang a good song, and a better hand at a rubber never lifted a card. We had also an aspirant to the prowess of Nimrod from London (who was to make his first appearance on the moors that day), in the person of the Honourable Henry Augustus Twynne. He was introduced to me by my young friend, Lord Charles B——, who requested that I would pay him all the attention in my power; and, as he was a perfect novice, although an enthusiast (in anticipation) of the sport, he would feel obliged if I would place him under the charge of my keeper. Mr. Twynne was a youth of about twenty; he was equipped, in regard to his shooting materials, in the first style; his gun was an undoubted "Manton," and he had brought a dog all the way betwixt his legs with him, on the top of the mail-coach. When we were all assembled he made such a boast of the excellence of this dog, that at the general request he was introduced for our inspection: he was certainly a noble-looking animal—a setter of a pure white and liver colour, and gave every impression of having

been daily washed and combed. He received the praise of all present excepting Captain M'Cabe, who remained silent on the subject, declining to give any opinion until he saw how he would work in our rough cover.

Our party now all surrounded the dinner-table preparatory to our driving to the village on the moor, where we had arranged to bivouac for the night, to enable us to start by daybreak to our sport. All were in high spirits and excitement, and the conversation was wholly absorbed with the expressions of hope, and the chances we had, from the accounts we received from the moors, of good sport.

We were all anxious to be off—our carriages were at the door. Our dinner was therefore a rough and hurried one, and some amusement was afforded by the Honourable Henry Augustus Twynne appearing in pumps and full dress.

It was about eight o'clock when we reached the moor—our accommodation for the night was arranged, and I was billeted in a double-bedded room with Captain M'Cabe and his dog Dido; but I had much reason to deplore my unhappy lot, as he completely deprived me of every chance of sleep that I might have had during the whole course of the night. He had not well got into the arms of Morpheus when he began to snore most vehemently, in chorus with Dido. When this in some degree had ceased, and I was congratulating myself with the hope of obtaining a few hours' tranquil rest, I was again roused by his every minute starting up in his bed, and shouting at the full pitch of his voice—"Down, dog—Ware hares—Mark that bird—Take heed, Dido—now we have them—Bang!" suiting the action to the word by snapping his fingers, "Down, charge," &c., &c. I at last, in despair, gave up all hopes of sleep, and was truly thankful when my servant called me at the appointed hour.

There was now a general bustle over the house—every one was astir; and the whole party appeared almost at the same moment in their shooting-dresses in our little breakfast parlour, where the table was covered with all that could tempt our appetites. I could not help contrasting the style of dress of Captain M'Cabe with that of The Hon. Henry Augustus Twynne. The appearance of the former was certainly by no means prepossessing—his costume resembling that of a dash between a London drayman and an Italian.

brigand. He wore a shooting-coat which had evidently seen no little service, being much the worse for wear, and covered with spots of mud and blood; his inexpressibles were made of dark thick moleskin, which buttoned loosely below the knees. He wore a pair of thick-soled shoes, that had been steeped in goose grease for months, over which were a pair of short gaiters to match the breeches; and all this useful but certainly not ornamental attire, was surmounted by a Glengarry cap, which was stuck in a most menacing style on one side of his head. The Hon. Mr. Henry Augustus Twynne, on the other hand, wore a span new black velvet coat, with large white mother-of-pearl buttons; to one of the upper buttonholes was affixed a ribbon, to which was attached a silver dog-call, with his crest and initials engraved thereon. He had a fancy waistcoat of a bright shawl pattern—his breeches were of pure white corduroy, with continuations in the shape of bright yellow leather half leggins, which reached near to the ankle, where they were met by a pair of light boots, lacing in front, and fitting with the precision and nicety of a pair of French kid gloves to the hand. He wore a light Leghorn hat turned up with green silk, which had a loose pink ribbon attached from its band to the first buttonhole of his coat, to prevent the wind carrying it away, of which there was not much need for apprehension in the dog-days.

Having fortified our stomachs with an excellent foundation in the shape of breakfast, we were all congregated in front of the inn. It was a splendid morning—the fine genial fresh air, with the sweet smell of the heather; the impatient yells of the dogs dancing around us, anxious to begin the day; and the beautiful blue heaven-kissing mountains before us, which ere night we must cross the summits of—created a feeling of excitement and delight in the bosoms of all, which could scarcely have been produced by any other cause.

The Hon. Mr. Twynne at this time experienced his misfortune number one. His beautiful setter was playing around him, when Mr. Halkett, who had as usual put some powder into his gun to season it, flashed it off. The dog (who evidently had never heard a gun fired) in one moment took to his heels as fast as his legs could carry him, and made for a long belt of plantation of natural timber, which he crossed in an incredibly short space of time. Captain

McCabe gave a prolonged whistle, his head a significant chuck, a withering look of contempt, and began to hum the tune of "Through the wood, laddie;" while Mr. Twynne's look of dismay and disappointment excited all our risible faculties. The last view we had of this miscreant deserter was doubling the top of a hill, fully a mile off, with unabated speed—He was never seen more——

The important business of filling our flasks was now the consideration; and from the different instructions conveyed to the servant who had this duty in charge, a pretty correct estimate might be formed of the temperate habits of each of the party. Mr. Twynne requested his one to be filled with pale sherry; Sir Walter, old port; Mr. Halkett, cold tea; Captain McCabe, some of Sir Walter's 30 per cent. overproof rum; whilst I had a little weak brandy-and-water.

We now divided into gangs; and to each I portioned off a part of the moor, arranging that we should all meet for refreshment at Johnny Havery's far-famed "Physic Well;" where the cart with the provender was ordered to be, with our servants, in waiting for us at five o'clock.

Captain McCabe and Dido, with a herd-boy, started first. Sir Walter, accompanied by his own keeper, who knew the ground well, had selected a long glen for his day's sport. Mr. Halkett chose Johnny Havery to accompany him; whilst Mr. Twynne and my own keeper, Greer, were my companions. The day, for the purpose, could not have been surpassed—there was just sufficient, and not too much, wind to assist the scent of the dogs.

Whilst Mr. Halkett and Johnny Havery were making for the dell which they had marked out to be the scene of their exploits, they got into conversation.

"Well, Johnny," said Mr. Halkett, "how has the world been using you lately?"

"Deed, sir," replied Johnny, "no that weel ava. The folk a' gang awa to foreign pairts to thae dredfu' wars, where the French shoot them; and whether they inter them, or what they do with them after that, guid only kens! As for me, I hae nae had a han's turn o' wark, or buried a leevin' soul, for the last sax months."

"That is *not* a matter for much regret," said Mr. Halkett smiling; "however, we shall see if we can find you something more profitable to do by and bye."

"But see, sir," said Johnny, "the dugs are stannin'—from their keepin' their heads so low, they maun, I think, be upon red fule. I'm judgin' they're rinnin' quick, but dinna hurry yersel', sir. Follow the dugs up close, gif ye please—be ready, they'll rise in a minute or twa; pick out the auld birds if ye can—now, then!"

Mr. Halkett fired right and left, and brought down two fine young grouse, which proved very strong on the wing.

Mr. Twynne, Greer, and I, were trudging over the ground we had selected, when I was compelled several times to caution the former not to carry his gun at full cock, or its muzzle pointed in our direction, or to the ground, which he persisted in doing. We were, however, constrained to part company with him, in consequence of an accident arising from his carelessness and inexperience, which might have proved a serious affair. Andrew Greer was about seventy paces in advance, with his back to him, when a hare started up betwixt them. Twynne fired, and his shot lodged in the back of poor Greer's head, who instantly fell with his face to the ground; he was, however, only stunned, and immediately recovered his feet, streaming with blood. I was truly thankful to hear his voice again, and remonstrating with Mr. Twynne, whilst he was coolly picking the pellets from his head. I was now obliged, from a feeling of safety and comfort, to propose to Mr. Twynne, which he at once agreed to, that we should separate, to avert the possibility of a similar, and perhaps more serious, occurrence; besides, poor fellow! I noticed that his boots had already begun to pinch him, from which it was evident he would not have been able to keep pace with us much longer. With a couple of dogs, and accompanied by a herd-boy, he therefore made for the highlands, and had not been absent for more than twenty minutes, when we saw him making all speed down towards us, waving some thing large and white in his hand.

"What is to do now," said I, "Mr. Twynne?"

"Do!" he said, "why, d—me! I've shot a cherubim."

It proved to be a poor inoffensive owl, which he had ruthlessly massacred when enjoying its roost.

Sir Walter was very fortunate in his first essay; he came upon a covey of black game, from which he bagged two brace, including the old cock. No one had seen Captain M'Cabe since we parted, but we heard him platooning during the

whole day ; and Greer remarked that he must have his bag well filled, as he seldom or never missed.

Mr. Halkett and Johnny, by midday, had a miscellaneous bag full ; they had picked up a brace of ptarmigan, a wild-duck, three couple of jack-snipes from the neighbourhood of the loch, and unintentionally shot a grey hen, which was a subject of much regret to both of them. It was now approaching the hour we had fixed for our dinner at the "Physic Well," for the enjoyment of which we were all well prepared. Greer and I reached the spot first, and we could perceive the different members of our party in the extreme distance, betwixt us and the horizon, making for the place all in opposite angles. We found that our servants had laid the eatables, wine, &c., out in order, on the ground. All had assembled excepting our young friend, Mr. Twynne, who was missing. At last, however, he was descried by Johnny at a far distance. "Yonder he comes," he said, "pickin' his steps, and creepin' along 'like a hen on a hot girdle ;' " he, poor fellow ! having dearly paid the penalty of his tight boots.

We now compared notes, and we found that all of us, poor Twynne excepted, had had about equal luck ; and when our bags were emptied, and their contents displayed, we found that the havoc had been far from trifling. Every one now prepared to attack the good things before him.

"I must have a glass of port-wine," said Captain M'Cabe, "ere I can masticate a morsel," of which my servant filled him up a bumper, as he thought. M'Cabe tossed it off at a gulp, but he had scarcely done so when his nose, previously very red, assumed the colour of a deep purple ; his cheeks became as yellow as saffron ; and, turning up the whites of his eyes in a wild and frightful manner, he threw himself on his back, and frantically exclaimed—"It's ALL OVER WITH DUNCAN M'CABE !"

"Good gracious !" cried Sir Walter, "what is the matter, M'Cabe ?"

"*Poisoned—poisoned—poisoned !*" he gasped out, seemingly in the greatest agony.

"There's naething," said Johnny Havery, taking a logical view of matters, "that could puzzlin a man here."

"Has the captain been subject to fits ?" mildly inquired Mr. Halkett.

"Why don't you use the stomach-pump?" slowly drawled the Honourable Henry Augustus Twynne.

"Tut!" said Sir Walter, quite provoked, "we don't generally bring stomach-pumps to the moors with us."

"What, in the name of goodness, have you given the captain?" I inquired of my servant.

"It was from this, sir," he replied, handing me the bottle; and the laughter I thought would never have ceased, when, after smelling and tasting the contents, I announced that the servant by mistake had given Captain McCabe a brim claret glassful of *ketchup*! An equal quantity of brandy, however, restored the captain to his equilibrium, and proved a rapid and sufficient antidote.

We had done every justice to the dinner, and the wine had passed pretty freely. Our keepers, herds, and gillies, had also partaken of the good fare, and liberty and equality, being tacitly acknowledged, seemed to prevail. Much interchange of badinage had gone on—Johnny and Greer, particularly, were pitted against each other. The former wore an old grey hat that I had given him the previous year; and, noticing a broad piece of crape around it, I asked him if he had lost any near relation.

"Atweel I hae, sir," said Johnny, "my auld wife, Leezie; she was aye a guid wife to me, but I paid every respect to her memory, as my guid-brither, Tam Glen, and mysel', took her to Glenlivet in the Heelans, and laid her beside her forebears there. It cost me a poore o' siller, but I didna' begrudge it."

"Yes," said Andrew Greer, "that's a' very true, Johnny; but ye haena' tauld the laird and the gentlemen what ye filled the hearse wi' when ye brought it back."

Johnny gave Greer a look with his wild and expressive eye, worthy of Balfour of Burley in his most vindictive moments.

"Aundrey Greer," he deliberately grunted, with an abortive attempt at dignity, "it wad obleege me very much, and it wad suit ye better, if you wad mind your dugs, your powther, and your pairicks, and no' fash your head wi' my concerns. We hae plenty o' scoundrel scamps and thieves already, without bringing the gauger up to the muir amang us;" and after a short pause he said, appealing to the company—"Whar was the great harm, gentlemen? Tam and I only brocht twa or three gallons o' whusky hame wi' us."

"Bravo! Very well done, Johnny!" shouted Captain M'Cabe.

"D—d fine!" lisped the Honourable Henry Augustus Twynne.

"Johnny," said Mr. Halkett, "such a proceeding was certainly very reprehensible."

Whilst Sir Walter and I (who could scarcely contain ourselves) remarked that it was very shocking indeed; but Mr. Kettle, who had joined our party, exclaimed in evident distress, "That it was awful—awful to think that a member, and an official of the established Kirk o' Scotland, should have been guilty of robbing the king and defrauding the revenue;" to which Johnny remarked—"That he thought Mr. Kettle was in a *boiling* state."

"I have much reason to be incensed," replied Mr. Kettle, "when I think that two of my parishioners, yourself and Tam Glen, who appears to have been your aider and abettor, should have been guilty of such a shocking, shocking, and wicked crime, as to use such a sacred vehicle for such an unhallowed purpose."

"Tam Glen," returned Johnny, "I *will not* hear abused (of whom he tried to give a favourable impression by the rather singular anomaly); he considered him," he said, "an upright, downricht, strechtforward, honest man."

"Yes," said Mr. Kettle, "but that does not the less excuse you, John."

"Hoot awa'," rejoined Johnny, appealing to the common sense of the company; "what are ye a' haverin' aboot—and what was't, after a' ? *I just took awa' the body, and brought back the speerit.*"

This remark produced a hearty laugh, and a cheer in Johnny's favour, which in some measure turned the tables on Andrew, his assailant.

The spirit of conviviality increased as the evening advanced; and Mr. Halkett seemed to enjoy the scene and the *heterogeneous* assemblage of men, dogs, gillies, guns, game, &c., that surrounded us.

Sir Walter now requested that Captain M'Cabe would favour the company with a song, which proposal was received with vociferous acclamations from all the assemblage; and, after clearing his voice, and tossing off a bumper of claret, he at once complied.

CAPTAIN M'CABE'S SONG.

"When the grey morning breaks o'er the dew-powder'd soil,
 And his way the herd takes, light of heart, to his toll,
 I rise ere the sun darts his beams, health to court,
 Call my dog, load my gun, and away to the sport.
 Creeping slow thro' the heather, the covey are met;
 Take heed, Dido—good dog! she has 'em, they're set;
 I mark them, they rise (bang, bang), two are fated to die,
 I bag them, and onwards trudge Dido and I.

"When the sun reaches noon, I rest down on the sod,
 And think on the miles upon miles I have trod;
 Whilst a lunch and a glass cheers and mellow my heart,
 And again with fresh vigour and ardour I start;
 But hold—in the heather, see Dido stops short,
 'Ware hares, Dido—good dog! true—she points to the sport,
 Whir, whir, goes the brood! (bang, bang,) two others must die,
 I bag them, and homewards trudge Dido and I.

"Thus brace after brace, for my arm's pretty true,
 I bag on a space what few sportsmen can do;
 With appetite keen, to my box then I go,
 Whilst the charms of the scene set my soul in a glow,
 Where the rose and the jessmine perfumes are so sweet,
 And my pretty maid meets me so trig and so neat,
 My dinner I relish, and my grog I near shy,
 Then soon unto roost we trudge, Dido and I."

Much applause followed Captain M'Cabe's song, which, when finished, he regaled himself with one or two bumpers.

We now all prepared to return home; Mr. Halkett and his servant only having taken possession of his cottage, remaining behind to enjoy the shooting and fishing for a week or two at least. When we reached home, having dressed and refreshed ourselves, we joined the ladies, who, we learned, had been waiting a late dinner for us for some time, rather impatient for our return. Captain M'Cabe was in high spirits, and recounted most graphically all our exploits of the day. "Mr. Twynne," the captain observed, "was, like the *trends* of the parish, 'totally exhausted;'" which assertion was very soon confirmed, as shortly afterwards, whilst conveying a spoonful of pudding to his mouth, he was in one moment overtaken by the spirit of *Morpheus*, and remained in a state of total unconsciousness for fully two hours; during which period Captain M'Cabe had taken the liberty, with a burned cork, to embellish his countenance according to his own taste, and suggested to me that we had better allow him to enjoy his sleep; and, when he had extinguished the lights, he left him alone in the dining-room,

giving the most particular and *humane* instructions to the servants that he should not on any account be disturbed.

When the Honourable Mr. Henry Augustus Twynne awoke, he had considerable difficulty in recalling to his recollection the particular locality in which he was placed, and under what circumstances he could possibly be shrouded in darkness and in solitude, when the sweet vibration of a harp from the drawing-room brought him at once to his senses, and he mustered sufficient courage to join the ladies.

When he entered the room, he was much surprised at the unaccountable reception which he met with ; all seemed to stare with an appearance of wonder, followed by a general titter. McCabe looked the picture of innocence, whilst I began to blame myself for having permitted him to take such a liberty with Twynne, but was soon relieved when I saw my wife whispering in his ear—"I am afraid, Mr. Twynne, that Captain McCabe has been practising some of his *coarse wit* upon you, and I think you had better retire to your dressing-room for a few minutes."

When the Honourable Henry Augustus Twynne looked in the glass he was horror-struck—he could not possibly have recognised his own countenance ; however, after a profuse ablution and an adjustment of his dress, he again appeared in the drawing-room "like a giant refreshed," and, considering that he had sufficient licence for revenge on Captain McCabe, he determined to give him a "Roland for an Oliver ;" consequently, during the remainder of the evening, he allowed him little peace, until his jokes and remarks became at last so very personal that I was obliged to request Mr. Twynne as a favour to abstain from further annoying the captain.

Mr. Halkett remained for nearly a month upon the moors, hunting and fishing. In compassion he sent down an invitation to Mr. Twynne to visit him at the cottage ; and in the course of a few days, under the tuition of Johnny, he became a fair shot, and a more safe sporting companion than he had been.

Dr. Moore and I, during Mr. Halkett's sojourn on the mountains, paid him several visits ; and on the last of these occasions he returned with us, and again settled down in his sweet and peaceful retreat, "The Grove," where, in his absence, many improvements had been made according to his own directions and taste, and where he now lived constantly, in

preference to occupying the beautiful mansion on an extensive estate that I had lately purchased for him in the adjoining county.

Mr. Halkett occupied "The Grove" for a long term of years; and in the course of that period a day seldom passed that we did not meet during some portion of it. He continued also to spend much of his time at Dr. Moore's, in whose family he had ever taken much interest.

CHAPTER V.—THE WILL.

AT the commencement of the year 18—, we all of us noticed with much distress a gradual falling off in Mr. Halkett's state of health; and his servant Henry informed us that he often complained of a severe pain in the place where he had been wounded, where the doctor gave it as his opinion that he feared that the *pleura* had been injured, and never properly healed. We endeavoured to keep up his spirits as much as possible, but this we found a difficult task. He came at my urgent request and resided some weeks with us, in the hope that we might amuse him; but, contrary to his nature and character, he now seemed to take an interest in nothing. During the summer, Dr. and Mrs. Moore accompanied him to a favourite watering-place, hoping that perhaps change of air might in some measure renovate his constitution; but they had not been long absent when he expressed a wish to return to "The Grove."

Our solicitor from town, with whom he had been on terms of great intimacy for years, came at this period to visit Mr. Halkett, for the purpose of arranging several matters of importance in connection with his late land purchases. One evening, after having closed their business and finished a well-contested rubber, Mr. Halkett, addressing Dr. Moore and myself, observed—"I have been thinking, my good friends, whilst Mr. Olden is here, it will be an excellent opportunity, as I now feel my health in a precarious state, of making a settlement of my worldly affairs." We both expressed a hope that he would yet be long spared to us—at the same time we observed, as a matter of prudence and business, it might be as well that he had this duty performed

and off his mind, which was also urged by Mr. Olden. He then narrated how he meant his vast wealth to be disposed of.

One half he set aside to be divided in equal shares amongst his nearest of kin, should any such appear and satisfactorily establish their claims, after having been advertised for in all the metropolitan and provincial papers for twelve months.

Should no claimants start up, the amount was to be applied in founding and supporting an hospital for the relief of indigent old persons of both sexes, who had been reduced in the world through misfortune, and had seen better days.

He left to myself a handsome legacy, and during his lifetime presented my wife and daughters with many costly gifts; and, moreover, placed to the credit of the account of each in the bank, the sum of five thousand pounds.

He left to each of his dependants and clerks, both at home and abroad, annuities according to the length and nature of their services. To Henry Vane, his faithful attendant and valet for upwards of twenty years, he left his wardrobe, and made a special and most liberal provision for him. Around "The Grove," and in the village on the moor, he had a number of pensioners, mostly old poor deserving people, to each of whom he had been in the habit of making a weekly allowance. In providing for all these poor creatures after his death, he left a fund to the parish which was to be judiciously invested, and the interest of which applied to this and a similar purpose for ever. "And now," he said, addressing Dr. Moore, "I come to the disposal of my landed property—I mean my recently purchased estate of 'Arkwell.' In consideration of the great kindness that I have received for so many years from you and yours, and on condition that the name of Halkett is adopted by my successor, I leave it to Charles, or your eldest surviving son, at my death; and failing him and any family he may have, to your next son George and his family in like succession; then Henry and his heirs; then Frederick and his heirs; then William and his heirs—then, lastly"—

"Stop, stop!" cried Dr. Moore; "I think you have now gone far enough—it is not at all likely that poor John will ever have much chance after so many with their families (for they are all marrying men) are disposed of."

"Come," said Mr. Olden laughing, "put in my son William's name next, and I will charge you nothing for making the will."

"Well," replied Mr. Halkett, "so let it be;" and of this settlement (which was duly engrossed, signed, and sealed the following day) Dr. Moore and I were appointed sole executors.

Our worthy friend did not appear to improve in health—his physician confidentially told me that his constitution was entirely broken up, and that he had very little hope of his permanent recovery. He used occasionally some days to feel better, and a temporary reaction in his physical strength would appear to take place. On one of these occasions he proposed a visit to the cottage on the moor for a day's sport; I accompanied him on this excursion, the result of which proved what I had dreaded, and my fears were fully confirmed as he found himself quite inadequate to undergo any fatigue. His strength was gone, and with tears in his eyes he quietly observed—

"My dear G——, I cannot now do it, and I feel never will again."

We remained in the cottage for some days; but I was very thankful when my servant and I assisted him into his carriage, and saw him seated again in his easy-chair at "The Grove," as we had been much alarmed from his having been seized one night with a violent attack of spasms.

We found several changes had taken place, even within that short space of time, amongst our old friends at the village on the moor. Mr. Kettle had died very suddenly; and Johnny Havery had in consequence removed to town, and commenced the professions of barber, cow-doctor, &c. Johnny, however, continued to practise his old habit of waggish roguery. He was one day sent for to prescribe for a cow of the landlord of the inn, that was supposed to be dying. When introduced to the animal, he walked up to its head, and after having with much appearance of mystery felt and examined it, he said—

"I must have a quartern of the best brandy that can be had in the toon," which was immediately brought to him; he again approached the suffering beast, and surreptitiously conveyed the brandy into his own stomach. "There," he said, "dee ye or leeve ye, you'll be nocht the waur o' that." The animal recovered, and Johnny's reputation as a cow-doctor was established.

Johnny, however, did not long remain a resident of our

town (carrying his waggers a little too far); he was guilty of an outrage which was the means of his expatriation.

Since he settled in town, he had become the principal leader of a political party, who had disgraced themselves and their country, called "Blacknebs." They took an extreme and unpatriotic view of public affairs—revolutionary in their principles, disapproving of the measures of the king and his government, the carrying on of the war, exulting in the possibility of an invasion; in fact, great admirers of the proceedings of the late French revolution and its miscreant leaders, Robespierre, Danton, and Marat. Disloyal, cowardly, and dissatisfied, this sect was very limited, but still sprinkled to a certain extent over the length and breadth of the land. Johnny Havery was a notorious Blackneb.

At the most critical period of the war, when England was menaced by preparations to invade her, and French troops had actually landed in Ireland; Pitt—who had not only to finance, but to guide the helm of the state, steadily, in the face of every obstacle and opposition thrown in his way to thwart and impede him; but whose consummate wisdom, and more than human exertions, at the cost of his valuable life saved the country, and earned for him the sobriquet of "the pilot that weathered the storm"—had occasion to despatch an important secret mission to Ireland, which he intrusted to his best friend and brother statesman, the Right Hon. Henry D——. Mr. D—— had been travelling post haste for two successive nights, taking little time for either refreshment or rest. When he reached the G—— Arms, where before he had been used to stop during the night, he threw himself on a bed to obtain (if possible) an hour or two's sleep, leaving instructions that he should be called at six o'clock in the morning, that he might proceed with all speed on his journey, and to engage a barber to shave him at that hour, as he was unable to do so himself on account of his whole nervous system being, from fatigue and excitement, completely shattered and unstrung.

Johnny Havery, who was often similarly called upon at early hours in the morning to perform this operation to travellers, appeared on this occasion punctually with his apparatus, according to orders. He had uncovered and bared Mr. D——'s neck, and made the other necessary preparations to commence his work, when he recognised the person

upon whom he was about to operate; stared him full in the face with one of his most fiendish looks; and, having whetted it on his hand, drew the back of the cold razor quickly across Mr. D——'s throat, yelling out at the full pitch of his voice—

“TAKE THAT, YOU TRAITOR!”

and, tossing the razor on the ground, made his escape from the house.

Mr. D——, not doubting in his nervous state but that his head was nearly severed from his body, furiously rang the bell, calling out, “Help! help! Treason! Murder! murder!” and in a minute or two the room was filled with half-dressed lodgers, waiters, chambermaids, &c.

“What is the matter?” said Mr. S——, the landlord, in great alarm.

Mr. D—— replied almost in a fainting state, “Why, don't you see that my throat is cut nearly from ear to ear?”

“Excuse me, sir,” observed Mr. S——, after making a minute examination, “but I cannot perceive the appearance of any thing of that nature.”

“Why, there's the razor which the villain used, no doubt covered with my blood;” the razor was picked up and examined, but there was no blood to be seen upon it. Still, Mr. D—— would not be convinced that he had sustained no injury, until the dressing-glass was brought to him, and his mind set at rest that it was so. “Where is the villain?” said Mr. D——, now unable to resist laughter, “and what is he?” Mr. S—— told him that he was a person well known in the town, of eccentric but harmless habits—that he had made his escape, and could nowhere be found. Mr. D—— now enjoyed the joke, and Mr. S——, having performed Johnny's duty for him, and supplied him with some refreshments, he took his departure on the important mission in which he was employed, and in which he had been delayed a full hour longer than he intended, from Johnny Havery's act of atrocity.

This event created no common interest in our town. The execrations against Johnny were loud, long, and general. A reward was offered for his apprehension, but Johnny was not to be caught; he was hiding no one knew where, excepting Andrew Greer, who by some means discovered his

retreat, in a ruinous hovel used as a shelter for cattle, on my estate on the moors.

When Andrew visited him in this miserable place, he found him in a sadly depressed state of mind, and he did not much contribute to his ease of mind, when he told him that the "Hue and Cry" was out against him, for putting in bodily fear, and attempting the life of one of his Majesty's ministers; that the hemp by which he would be hanged by the neck until he was dead, dead, dead, was already sown, grown, hackled, and twisted.

He entreated Andrew to judge of him more charitably, and to keep his place of concealment secret until he had made up his mind what course he would take. Meantime, he requested him to convey to him all the cash he had in the bank, for which he gave the necessary order. This was done by Andrew; but on going with some provisions for him a few days afterwards, he found that the bird had flown, and Johnny Havery was never more heard of.

As winter approached, our dear friend Mr. Halkett, it was too evident, was gradually sinking. After some persuasion, I prevailed on him to have a medical man constantly to reside in the house with him, and I was as much with him as my time would permit. His illness was painful and protracted, but even, during his most severe suffering, his mind continued in that serene and tranquil state which had been his characteristic through a long life.

One morning early, Henry, his servant, came hurriedly over to tell me that his master had been suddenly taken very ill, and had expressed an anxious wish to see me, and that Dr. Moore had been with him during the whole night.

By the time I reached "The Grove" he had become much worse; he had entirely lost his powers of speech; but when I entered the room he held out his hand to me, and with the most resigned and benign expression pointed with his finger upwards, and a few minutes more had scarcely elapsed when the spirit of this surpassingly kind, philanthropic, and charming old man was wafted to those realms of peace, joy, and love, from which no traveller ever returns.

In compliance with his most particular, and amongst his last, requests, we conveyed his remains without ostentation to London, and deposited them beside those of his lamented wife and child.

Charles Moore, who had for some time been in bad health in India, was ordered to return to England; and, when he reached home, found himself the unexpected proprietor of the magnificent estate of Arkwell. He very shortly afterwards married; but did not enjoy the married state or his property long, as he died within two years after succeeding to it, without any family. George, his brother, who had been educated a surgeon, now stepped into the property. He survived his brother only for about one year, and died a bachelor. Henry, who had been brought up to the law, married early, and had three children. When he came into the estate, he was a fine, healthy-looking man, and gave promise of long life; he, however, also was doomed not to enjoy his good fortune, as he was drowned by the upsetting of his boat whilst fishing on the coast near his property, and his three children did not survive him more than a year or two—one of them pined away in consumption, and the other two died from measles. Frederick Moore, the next in succession—a clergyman—now succeeded to the estate. He was a married man, with one child. By an accident he had, through a fall from his horse, sustained an internal injury, which, ere long, was the cause of *his* death; his child also pined away and died; and William Moore, the fifth of Dr. Moore's sons, was killed in India. So that the "Arkwell" estate, by one of those inscrutable, marvellous, and mysterious dispensations of Providence, which we cannot in our short-sighted wisdom understand, passed, according to Mr. Halkett's last testament, to William Olden, Jun.; whilst John Moore, a farmer, and the last of Dr. Moore's family, is, with very stinted means, struggling hard to support his wife and a family of *six* girls.

After advertising in the principal newspapers, both in town and country, for upwards of two years, no legitimate claimant for the property ever appeared. We had many applications from persons of the same name, who represented themselves as distant cousins, &c.; but none could prove or authenticate their pretensions, although much trouble was taken by them to do so, and even in two instances lawyers were employed.

Dr. Moore and I, finding ourselves advancing in life, have deemed it prudent to call in more assistance in the management of Mr. Halkett's trust—the funds of which we have

allowed to accumulate for so long a period ; and I hope our new trustees will join us heartily in carefully following out the arrangements which are now in progress, so that the intentions of this worthy and excellent man may be fulfilled in their true spirit. My only regret is, that some provision has not been made for poor John Moore ; as I am sure the benevolent testator, had he for a moment imagined the possibility of such a singular mortality, would have never allowed the estate to be diverted from the family of Dr. Moore.

The Reclaimed.

CHAPTER I.—WILD OATS.

I HAVE always endeavoured to impress upon my young friends that *the most pernicious waste is that of Time*. A single day lost in an emergency, I have seen often attended with consequences most fatal—disasters that might have been averted, by putting the shoulder to the wheel when threatened with misfortune.

The history and extraordinary adventures of my good friend, Mr. Henry Wilding, evinces a remarkable instance of what really *can* be done by exertion and mental energy.

"When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions."

It is seldom that a misfortune is sent to try us alone; we are generally visited by an accumulation of troubles. Under such circumstances, thousands have fallen from the want of that foresight necessary in business—a *preparation to meet any emergency*, to which all in trade are more or less liable; and the want of a cool discretion and firmness to encounter the evil when it *does* come, with fortitude, and a determination to exercise the judgment that God has given us to the best advantage under the most trying circumstances.

With such failings and deficiencies of character, the unfortunate trader has almost invariably sunk in despair, often never to rise again; whilst the man, who had the possibility of danger always before him, and who was possessed of courage and boldness, with honesty of purpose combined, to meet the storm, has been known to bound over one embarrassing event after another, until he had earned the truly satisfactory reflection of having saved himself by that resolution, so ennobling to human nature (and by simple exertion), from total

destruction, and the unspeakable pleasure of having struggled with and overcome all his difficulties.

To sink under misfortune is not only the excess of folly, but sinful in the extreme, evincing a total want of dependence on HIM who, in one moment, through his marvellous and unsearchable ways, can turn the tide of events, by means which we are neither allowed to fathom nor comprehend. How often have we seen the most dark and dense cloud hang over us in the morning, which threatened to burst upon our devoted heads, when a little speck of light in it appearing, would rapidly spread, and ere noonday would burst forth in all the effulgence and splendour of brilliant sunshine, dispelling the storm that threatened us, and wonderfully, in its stead, supplying a bright horizon, without a spot being left to baulk our heroism, harass our thoughts, or disturb our equanimity!

The pusillanimous man, when the hour of accumulated misfortune reaches him, like a thief in the night, becomes at once apathetic—concludes that those inflictions proceed from want of *luck*—that he is doomed—his chance gone, &c.,—and sinks down stupefied, stunned, sullen, and desperate, in contemptible inaction; while the high-minded, self-possessed, and dauntless man, with the conviction that Heaven is over him, is “up and doing,” resolved to rally all his energies and industry in the praiseworthy endeavour to save himself; and his exertions seldom fail to be crowned with success.

One afternoon, having finished my correspondence, I was preparing to leave for the day, when the clerk stepped into my private room, and mentioned that Mr. Henry Wilding had called and wished much to see me. I had no particular business with Mr. Wilding at the time, and rather wondered at receiving a visit from him at such an unusual hour, the bank having been closed for some time. I desired that he might be shewn in; and, having discussed the state of the weather and other indifferent subjects, I requested to know the object of his visit.

“The fact is, Mr. G——,” he said, “I called to converse with you on a matter which has lately been the cause of much uneasiness and distress to me, and in which I am so much puzzled how to act, that I fear to move (from the importance of the affair) on my own judgment; besides, it is of such an extremely delicate nature, that I have come to

consult you, being aware that any communications I may make to you will be held sacred, and that I shall receive from you the best advice."

I replied that he might rest assured that I would give him all the assistance in my power, as far as my judgment went; and that, as I was daily in the habit of having private matters communicated to me, he might entertain no apprehension of my abusing any confidence he should repose in me. But, ere I proceed, I must narrate the reason that prompted Mr. Wilding to visit me, and I will, therefore, give a short sketch of his history previous to this interview, which affords another illustration of the results that follow perseverance in the practice of industry, enterprise, and economy, and, in his subsequent life, the wisdom and good effects which arise from a manly and determined resolution not to sink in the hour of difficulty and danger, nor to be dismayed and paralyzed when the shock, however unexpected, comes; but to stare the evil broadly in the face, and by all mortal means, as far as our energies and indefatigable exertions will allow, make every effort to save ourselves from ruin—at all events, to ameliorate and ward off the blow, and wait patiently to see what Providence, time, and prudence will bring about.

Mr. Henry Wilding's grandfather was a man that stood prominent as the representative of an ancient and highly respectable family in the district to which he belonged. He was known to be very wealthy, besides possessing a very large landed property (the family estate) in North Wales, upon which he constantly resided. He married early in life into one of the most aristocratic families in the neighbourhood; a connection which suited his ideas, as, being a proud and haughty man, he was brought in contact, by this alliance, with all the rank and fashion of the district, with whom alone he associated. He was not, however, by any means popular with those he thought inferior to him in station, or with the lower classes, being austere, inaccessible in his manners, and illiberal in the extreme to his tenantry. His wife died when still young, leaving behind her to feel, suffer from, and deplore her loss, two children, a boy and a girl, at the tender ages of seven and five.

The Hon. Mrs. Wilding was one of the most amiable of women, tender and affectionate to her children, kind and

indulgent to her servants and dependants, and charitable and benevolent to the poor; in fact, a greater contrast in temper and disposition could scarcely be imagined, than existed betwixt her and her husband.

As it frequently happens that a boy takes his temper and tendencies from his mother, whilst a girl's feelings, inclinations, and propensities resemble oftentimes those of the father, in this case it was *precisely* so—young Henry, although high-spirited and manly for his years, was of the most affectionate nature; whilst Anne, his sister, began very soon to evince an austere, selfish, and haughty spirit.

A few years had elapsed, when Henry, who had finished a college education, and Anne, a three years' attendance at a London school, returned home. The meeting, on his part, with his sister, was warm and affectionate in the extreme; whilst her manner towards her brother appeared apathetic, cold, and heartless. Mr. Wilding had always kept his son at a great distance from him, never having given him the least portion of his confidence; the consequence was, that the warm and ardent heart of Henry was soured, crossed, and damped; for, instead of that natural affection he yearned for from those he would have sincerely loved, he was constantly receiving rebuffs and discouraging remarks, both from his father and sister, which in time, had he remained at home, would have entirely broken his young spirit.

"Don't imagine, sir," said his father to him one evening, after they had finished dinner, "that I mean to consult *your* feelings or inclinations on the subject of the profession you are to follow in your future life. I merely mention it for the purpose of ascertaining what department in the course of your studies you excelled (if in any), that I may judge what you are qualified for, it being now high time that you were settled in some honourable calling." Henry replied that he had not turned his attention to *any* particular study, but he believed that he was thought to be a good mathematician—had a thorough knowledge of geography, and was a fair classical scholar.

"In that case," returned his father, "I see nothing for it but that you must join the army, for which you seem best fitted," and a commission in the dragoons was procured for him accordingly. The regiment was under orders for India; but, before joining it, he was commanded to proceed and

remain for months at the dépôt at Chatham. While there, he formed an attachment for a young lady, the daughter of a clergyman, both beautiful and accomplished, a

"Soft, modest, melancholy female fair,"

whom he made his wife just before he was ordered to embark, and who accompanied him to share his fortunes, joys, and troubles.

When his father heard of his having taken this step without even consulting him, he allowed no bounds to his rage—he declared that he never should have any assistance from him in any shape whatever, and he kept his word. He died within twelve months afterwards, having made a will leaving his entire property to his sister, and cutting him off with a shilling.

Henry had been in India for four years in active service; his promotion had been very rapid, as within that time he obtained his majority; and his only child, Henry, the subject of this narrative, was born.

Major Wilding had written repeatedly to his sister, without receiving any answer to his letters. He had heard of the cruel settlement that his father had made, from a Mr. Price, who was the solicitor, and had always been a sincere friend of the family (and his father before him for nearly half a century). This gentleman, in his correspondence, threw out many vague hints that some undue influence had been exercised on the old man in making his last settlement; and even insinuations of a *worse* description were whispered on the subject, as an attorney of at least questionable character was employed in the matter, Mr. Price never having been consulted or called on by Miss Wilding to perform this last office for his old employer. Mr. Price added, that he would make it a duty to watch and inquire into their transactions, and ascertain, if possible, if any foul play had been used; and, should it turn out to be so, he would immediately communicate with Major Wilding, who, however, never doubted but that his sister would in some measure do away with the unfavourable impression he attached to the memory of his father, by at all events placing him on an equality with herself. In this respect, however, he calculated without his host. Miss Anne Wilding was not the sort of person likely to be prompted by feelings of justice, sympathy,

or affection, to do a generous action ; as, even when he wrote to her at the time of his little Henry's birth, requesting some pecuniary assistance, she replied to his letter in the coldest manner possible, with a positive refusal, adding that, "as he had made his bed for *himself*, so he must now lie upon it." Major Wilding was much shocked at this unfeeling, unnatural, and most heartless epistle ; the reflection, however, upon which was for a time obliterated from the suffering he was doomed to endure in the loss of his beloved wife, who died when Henry had attained about his fourth year. Poor Wilding was for a long period inconsolable—however, he was again called into active service, when his career was cut short, as he fell in the Burmese war, having previously fought his way up to the rank of colonel.

Poor little Henry Wilding was now left alone in India without a protector, and might have been entirely destitute, had not an old and sincere friend of his father's interested himself in his favour—obtaining from the East India Company a small pension, to be settled upon him for his education, until he attained the age of twenty-one. He was immediately sent to England, and placed at a school in the neighbourhood of London, where he remained for a number of years, and made creditable progress in the different branches of his education. When he was about fifteen, a situation was procured for him in the extensive commercial house of Holt, Maxton, & Co., and in a short time he became a great favourite in the establishment. He conducted himself with so much assiduity and talent, and displayed such a zealous interest in the business of the house, that in a few years he was elevated to the chief situation in the office, and was intrusted with the principal management of this great concern, with a handsome salary. Mr. Holt, the head of the firm, became in time very much attached to Henry, and used frequently to invite him to his country seat, to spend from the Saturday evening to the Monday morning with his family.

Mr. Holt was a widower, with only two children, a girl and a boy—the former about six years older than the latter : consequently, little Frederick was much indulged and made of by the whole house, which in after life, doubtless, laid the foundation for the trouble and anxiety he caused to all connected with him. He was a great pet of Henry Wild-

ing's when he made his weekly visits ; and, had he been his own brother, his attachment to the child could not have been greater. He never met him but with some toy or comfit—the consequence was that he became so passionately fond of the child, and the child of him, that they never were so happy as when together.

Henry Wilding, from strict attention to business, with extreme temperance and economy, rose so much in the opinion of the different members of the house, that he was made a partner, having already saved a considerable sum of money from his salary. His visits to Mr. Holt's residence were now more frequent than ever ; he spent almost all his spare time with the family ; where he frequently used to take long pleasure excursions with little Fred. and his sister Lucy, who had now become a tall handsome girl. These long walks had latterly been mostly with Lucy alone ; from which an intimacy arose, which at last began to assume a very interesting character : and an interchange of confidence sprung up between them, which ripened into a warm attachment, the progress of which had not been unnoticed by her father, who, upon Henry's application to him, at once gave his consent to their marriage, with the understanding that they all should live together.

Mr. Holt, who was getting old, left the management of the business entirely to Mr. Wilding ; Mr. Maxton, the other partner, residing constantly in Hamburgh, where he conducted an important branch of the concern. In the course of a few years Mr. Holt was seized with a fit of paralysis, from which he never recovered. He left a very handsome fortune to be divided equally between his two children ; and as Frederick, who had been for some time at Harrow school, would be a minor for many years, he in his will appointed Mr. Wilding his guardian—an office, as it will afterwards appear, which gave him unspeakable anguish and distress.

After the death of Mr. Holt, Mr. Wilding paid a visit to Harrow, to inquire as to the progress of Frederick's studies, and what promise he held out of talent, his disposition, manners, and habits, &c. The master informed him that he was naturally clever, was of an affectionate and amiable disposition, but simple and unsuspecting in the extreme ; so much so that the youngest boy in the school could lead him

away from his duty. Mr. Wilding consoled himself with the idea, that when Fred. acquired a little more knowledge of the world, this weakness would cure itself; in this, however, as it will by and bye appear, he was unfortunately disappointed.

Mr. Wilding had purchased an estate a few miles from my residence, where he spent the greater part of the summer; and, from this circumstance, did an extensive amount of business with our bank, not only on his own private affairs, but also with the London house. I could not fail to notice, in the course of the operations he made on his own account, the number of remittances he was constantly making to Frederick Holt, that at last I began to fear this youth was leading a fast life; however, I made no remarks on the subject to Mr. Wilding, nor would have suspected that matters had been carried beyond the common enough want of thought, from the effervescence and folly of youth, had Mr. Wilding not called, and confided to me the fact, that Frederick Holt had been guilty of crime, to an extent that, if known, would subject him to the highest penalty of the law, and the exposure of the family. "Indeed," he said, "Mr. G——, I am at a loss to know what course to take with this reckless, untractable, and deluded youth, for whom I retain as strong a regard and affection as you can possibly imagine; and what makes the matter the more painful to me is, the romantic attachment that his sister has ever had for him, and whom, on that account, I have kept in ignorance of the wicked course he has been leading, and am compelled the more to do so at the present time, she being so very delicate and near her confinement, that I should tremble for the consequences of any sudden shock."

Mr. Wilding then entered into a detailed account of the trouble and anxiety he had had with this unfortunate and misguided young man.

"The first and most startling information I received," he said, "of his delinquencies, was a letter I got from the master of the school at Harrow, complaining of certain vicious tendencies he had lately exhibited, with a total neglect of his education; which, if persisted in longer, would subject him to exposure and expulsion from the school, and entreating Mr. Wilding to use all the power and influence he possessed over him (if possible), yet to reclaim him. It would appear

that he had been guilty of a number of petty thefts, having on one occasion broken open the desk of one of his school-fellows, and plundered it of some valuable trinkets. It was pretty well known that he had confederates in those disreputable transactions ; indeed, 'twas said he was merely the tool of others, but this he would never confess. On receipt of this letter, I wrote young Holt in strong, but at the same time in as kind and affectionate terms as I could express, my distress at what I had heard, and enclosed, with my counsel and warnings, my letter open in one to the master, thanking him for his forbearance, and entreating him that, in consideration of the boy's respectable connections, being an orphan, and the likelihood of his being the dupe of others, to pass over his offences ; and, with some little difficulty, they were hushed up. The reply to this note was, that he had left the school the morning after its receipt, and had not been since heard of.

"This was a new source of anxiety to me ; I tried for a long time to find his whereabouts without effect ; at last a draft was presented to me for payment, drawn by him in favour of a French hotel-keeper in the Haymarket, for thirty-five pounds. I lost no time in seeing this person, who informed me that Frederick Holt had been an inmate of the house for several weeks, during which time he had led a very irregular life ; that he was under the baneful influence, apparently of several dissipated associates, one of whom, he learned, had left the school with him, and that Holt was gone, he knew not where. I was now compelled to employ a Bow Street officer to use his endeavours to find, and, if possible, save him ; who, after much trouble, at last traced him to one of his haunts—an infamous gaming-house, where he discovered him surrounded by the worst of characters ; and on following him to his lodgings, found he was located in a second class coffee-shop in Long Acre. When I went to this place," pursued Mr. Wilding, "you may imagine my distress in finding the lad, who had been brought up with so much tenderness and care, and upon whom so much had been spent in education, in such wretched circumstances. He did not observe me when I entered. I therefore took the opportunity of conversing about him with the landlord of the house ; from whom I learned that he had been living with them for a week or two, and volunteered his

occasional assistance in their business. I now sent for him, and, on his facing me, he seemed first taken by surprise and much alarmed, but soon recovered himself. I tried to represent the danger that would arise to him from the life he had lately been following, told him that I knew *all* that he had been guilty of, and enforced upon him the fact, that a continuation of the courses he had been leading would entail unspeakable misery upon him, and be the means, in the end, of bringing him to inevitable and certain ruin. He heard me in dogged and sullen silence. At last, he said he would not be controlled by me or any one else, but would be his own master; that I was bound to support him, and he would compel me to do so, either by one means or another. I now endeavoured to speak kindly and affectionately, entreating him to return home with me, if it were only on his sister's account, and I would promise that he should not be interfered with in any moderate, lawful, or proper pleasure or amusement which he might be disposed to indulge in, and would engage to supply him with a reasonable amount of cash, so that he should never be in want of pocket-money.

"These remonstrances had no effect upon him, nor could I touch his heart in any way. At last, when I saw that it was futile to attempt reclaiming or turning him, for the present, from his evil ways, I asked what his plans and intentions were; when he informed me that he meant to remain where he was—that I need not endeavour to interfere with him—that he was now eighteen years of age, and quite capable of taking care of himself. All these ideas, I knew, were *not* the dictates of the heart of my poor boy, but the result of the sad lessons he had received, and the impressions imbibed, or rather forced upon him, by his vile associates, who, although he had a literary turn of mind, managed to drag him night after night to their dens of iniquity."

"What a pity it is," I have often thought, "that young men do not devote more of their time to private study; it would add so much to their happiness! All men's misfortunes proceed from their aversion to be alone; hence gaming, riot, extravagance, wine, women, ignorance, railing, envy, forgetfulness of God and themselves—and of this we meet with daily proofs."

"Having discovered where he was, and the state of mind he was in," continued Mr. Wilding, "I deemed it the wisest

course again to see the landlord of the coffee-house, and arranged to pay him a weekly allowance for Frederick's board, and also promised to remunerate him handsomely if he would make it his business, as far as lay in his power, to keep him from bad company and dissipation, and to communicate with me at my city address, if ever he had committed any outrage; and if he did occasionally leave him, to ascertain where were his haunts and who his associates. To this he willingly agreed, and I left him, so far satisfied.

"A week, however, had not elapsed, when he wrote me a cool business letter, requesting that I would immediately send him twenty pounds. I complied with his request; but at the same time, in reply, told him that, as I had arranged to pay his board, &c., that a similar demand must not be made upon me for at least six months. Ten days, however, had not elapsed, when a low, shabby-looking fellow called at the office, with a draft upon myself for fifteen pounds, drawn by Frederick in favour of a person named Josiah Grainger. This document I returned, informing the person who brought it, not to repeat such an attempt to extort money, and to tell Mr. Holt that, if he required pecuniary assistance, to come and speak to me himself. Three months had elapsed ere I heard any thing more of him. I became rather anxious to know the cause; and, on calling at Long Acre, I was informed that, in company with two of his associates, he had gone to Doncaster races six weeks previously, and had not returned. I feared much that he must be employed in no very reputable way, from the circumstance of his never having again applied to me for funds.

"My surprise, however, as to the manner in which he carried on without means, was not of long duration; as, one morning on coming to the office, to my horror a forged bill for a hundred and fifty pounds, drawn by him and appearing to be accepted by me, was presented for payment, and two days afterwards another for eighty-five pounds. I saw through the whole story in a moment—he had been betting on the turf, fleeced by his wicked companions, and had adopted this infamous plan of raising money, knowing well that, for my own sake, I would not expose him. I paid the bills, but was at a loss to conceive what system I ought to pursue to stay this dreadful career, without exposing him and my family. I therefore wrote him threatening letters

to every place where I thought it probable he might be found, telling him that, on another such attempt, I should certainly lodge an information at Bow Street, when active officers would assuredly discover and make him amenable to the laws of his country.

"I heard no more of him for several months," pursued Mr. Wilding in a melancholy tone of voice, "until last night. I was sitting reading after dinner, when the servant came into the room, and informed me that a person was waiting in the hall desirous to see me, and would not give his name. You may imagine my surprise and dismay when, on reaching the hall, Frederick Holt stood before me in the uniform of a private trooper of the Seventh Hussars.

"It required some presence of mind for me to control my feelings, but I nerved myself to do so; and, in as cool and commonplace manner as I could assume before the servants, requested him to follow me into the library, which was fortunately at a distance from the dining-room, so that any conversation could not be heard by Mrs. Wilding. Holt opened the interview himself by saying that, according to my request, he had come personally for a supply of money. I indignantly told him that I was astonished at his effrontery in presuming to approach my presence, knowing the crimes of which he had been guilty, and more particularly to demand money after the amounts he had received from me by such atrocious means. He seemed hardened, stubborn, and desperate—said that he had been robbed of his all by those he had trusted, that he was in the greatest poverty, and had enlisted to obtain the common necessities of life; and that, unless I assisted him, he would do what all his connections would have cause to regret as long as they lived.

"'Where is my dear sister?' he continued; '*I must see her.*'

"I was obliged to equivocate a little, by telling him that his sister was at too great a distance at present for him to have an interview with her within a day or two; but I said that I would think over what was best to be done for him, and would call at his quarters, and let him know what I had determined upon, in the morning; but told him not on any account to return to my place, as any thing I might at present feel disposed to do for his advantage, would be at an end if he failed to comply with this request.

"Where are you living, and how happen you to be in that dress in this part of the country?"

"He told me he had taken up his abode at a public-house, near at hand to the Bank office—that he was a deserter, and consequently obliged to keep out of sight, and he had allowed the night to become dark ere he ventured to call upon me.

"I gave him a couple of guineas, saw him fairly out of the avenue with a sore heart, and instructed my servants on no account to admit him should he call again.

"And now, Mr. G——," said Mr. Wilding, "this is the extraordinary predicament in which I am placed; my heart still yearns with the greatest affection towards this unfortunate youth; and I come to solicit your opinion as to how you think I should act under such trying circumstances."

I immediately replied—that I thought there could not be two opinions on the subject. "This youth," I said, "unless stopped in his career of ruin, will commit some serious crime, that may expose all with whom he is connected; he has already given abundant proofs of a determined resolution to run himself headlong to destruction; and has clearly shewn, that neither kindness nor liberality will turn him from his vicious courses; and, since you *do* ask my candid ideas on the subject, however painful it might be, if he were *my* son, not only for his own sake, but for the sake of all those with whom he is connected, I would certainly abandon him to his fate, and endeavour by this means, since all others have failed, to inculcate wisdom and good conduct in him, by his being subjected to the severest punishment that can be inflicted, situated as he now is—an outcast, and a deserter. We must be cruel to be kind!"

"What!" asked Mr. Wilding, "would you not recommend me to buy him off? You know he will have a handsome fortune when of age."

"Certainly not," I replied; "this enlistment I look upon as the most fortunate circumstance that could have happened both to you and to him. Besides, you know virulent diseases require powerful medicines and strong measures, and he may live to thank you with his whole soul in after life for your acting as I would advise."

"But," returned Mr. Wilding, in evident distress, "the world, not knowing the circumstance, will certainly blame me as his guardian for conducting myself with such apparent

harshness towards him ; and I am sure, were his sister aware of the awful position he has at last brought himself to, that it would nearly kill her."

"The disinclination," I rejoined, "you shew to act upon my counsel, is natural and reasonable enough ; at the same time, if you agree with me that the course I recommend is the most prudent and judicious one, I would request you not to interfere further in the matter for the present, or even inquire what my intentions are, but leave it to me as a magistrate to manage this affair in my own way ; and depend upon it, in doing so, I will in every respect study the interests of the young man, and *your* feelings, as if they were my own." Mr. Wilding expressed himself in the strongest terms of gratitude to me, for the concern I had felt and evinced in this very distressing case. He said that his views now exactly coincided with my own, and that he would be governed entirely by my opinion and suggestions.

Immediately on Mr. Wilding leaving me, I sent for the sheriff's officer (whom we were in the habit of employing in the business of the bank), and instructed him to take under his strict and most particular surveillance a deserter from his Majesty's Seventh Hussars, who was now in concealment, and living at the "Crown Inn," and on no account to allow him to escape. By that evening's post I also wrote to the headquarters, informing the commanding-officer of a deserter from his regiment being in our town ; and in a few days a corporal's guard made their appearance in search of their prisoner, with whom I requested the sheriff's officer immediately to communicate, and the next morning, on entering the town, I saw Frederick Holt marched off, handcuffed, out of it.

Having taken this matter in hand, I imagined that I had still something more to do for the ultimate chance of bringing back this poor youth to a sense of his wickedness and folly. I therefore, having an intimate friend holding a high appointment at the War Office, wrote to him, giving the particulars of young Holt's history, suppressing that portion of it that might be the means of exciting a prejudice against him ; but merely in general terms informing him that he had been wild and thoughtless, and requesting, as a great personal favour, that he would write to the colonel of the regiment to say, that it was not the intention of his friends for the present to buy him off, but to hope that he would not be punished with

unnecessary rigour, at the same time he should be made to feel that his future prospects would entirely depend on his good conduct. To this effect I also wrote to Colonel Spencer, the commanding-officer, and requested him to value upon me for any means that might be required for his outfit.

A few weeks afterwards I noticed from the newspapers, that the Seventh Hussars had embarked for Bombay—a fact which I immediately communicated to Mr. Wilding, with the other particulars of what I had done, at which he told me a very great weight had been taken off his mind, as now it would afford him the opportunity of cautiously breaking the fact to Mrs. Wilding, that her brother had joined the army, without letting her know in what capacity, and that his regiment had been hurriedly ordered off to India.

CHAPTER II.—A VIRAGO.

A WEEK had not elapsed after this affair was so favourably settled, when Mr. Wilding one evening drove to my door, and the first glance I got of him showed me that some new perplexity had started up to annoy and harass him. In this I was not mistaken, as he very soon informed me that he had that morning received letters from the junior partner of his house of the most conflicting character. That Mr. Maxton, the chief of the establishment at Hamburgh, had absconded, and carried off an immense amount of property (as far as they could at present judge), which he must have been accumulating for months, as the usual and necessary remittances—the produce of the different cargoes sent to him for sale—were never made, to meet the engagements entered into for them by the house in London. “Under such circumstances,” he said, “I am compelled to start by this night’s mail for London, which is most distressing to me, as that event in my family which we have so long looked for, my medical attendant informs me, may take place within an hour or two; and, as Mrs. Wilding is so timid and nervous, I almost dread the consequence of my being absent from her on the occasion, and I have come to entreat you (being a family man) that you will kindly watch my interests in my

absence, a period which, as you may well suppose, will be as short as possible."

I offered him the kindest words of sympathy and encouragement, and told him that he might rest assured that I would do all in my power to render him every assistance in the manner he wished, and that I should write him every day regularly as to how things were going on.

"There is another matter," he added, "which I wish to speak to you upon, and on which I am sure you will, if consistent with your other engagements, accede to my wishes. You are aware of the position in which I am placed, in regard to the property of Frederick Holt. He has still three years to run of his minority; and as I do not know how that truly unfortunate and disastrous affair to my house may end, I consider it my duty to appoint a co-trustee on my late father-in-law's will, as, in the event of my bankruptcy or death, or being compelled perhaps to go abroad, some person of station and business habits will be necessary, when the time arrives, to realize and concentrate his effects and purchase land, which his father requested in his will should be done, on his attaining his majority. At present his property is invested in several amounts, both in public and private securities, the particulars of which you shall be informed of should you kindly agree to join me as one of the executors and trustees."

I thanked Mr. Wilding for the compliment, and replied that my hands were already pretty full of such matters; but as this was a peculiar case, and as I was aware of the delicate position in which he was placed, I would not object to act, at all events, for a limited period.

When Mr. Wilding arrived in London, he found things fully as bad, if not worse, than had been represented. Maxton had not only fled with all the cash he could secure, but bill after bill was daily presented, drawn by him upon the London house, as had been his practice in acting for the concern in Hamburgh, and for which he obtained the cash in Frankfort, where the firm was well known. Mr. Parry, the junior partner, from long-continued anxiety, fatigue, and excitement, became thoroughly prostrated, and incapable of rendering any assistance. Not so Mr. Wilding. All his energies seemed to have acquired additional force; indeed, almost supernatural strength. He knew that a single day's

relaxation of his exertions at this most critical moment, might prove fatal to the credit of the house ; whilst every hour, by the exercise of his good judgment and unwearied efforts, he was adding fresh props to its tottering structure.

In the mean time, I had to write to him of Mrs. Wilding's having been safely delivered of a fine boy ; but, at the same time, it gave me much pain to add, that she was not recovering so favourably as could be wished ; and I had, in consequence, thought it right to call in additional medical assistance—indeed, for some hours her life had been despaired of—a fact, however, I concealed from him ; but the news I had already sent proved quite sufficient to render him very miserable. Still he would not allow himself to be cast down, dismayed, or disheartened, so as to impede his activity or fetter his exertions. He relaxed no effort in procuring the assistance of friends, realizing goods, collecting outstanding debts, &c., to meet the engagements of the house ; and for a time would have stemmed the storm, until they received their remittances from their several correspondents abroad, to whom they had made various consignments, had not another most unexpected calamity come upon them, which would have been sufficient to confound and crush to the earth the spirit of most other men.

Mr. Wilding at this period, when his anxieties had reached, as he thought, their climax, received the intelligence of the total loss of a fine ship, off the Cape, with a valuable cargo. To this property he had looked forward, happen what might, as a landmark which would rescue them from the sea of disasters and pressing cares through which they had been so long struggling ; and, to add to this fresh and unlooked-for misfortune, he was now left *literally* to fight the battle alone, Mr. Parry having suddenly died in the cause, of anxiety and exhaustion. Yet *still* Mr. Wilding was not appalled or dismayed, but displayed even more activity, heroism, and fortitude, than he had ever done. Many of his advisers recommended "The Gazette" as the most prudent course he could now pursue ; but no. He said he had determined to save the credit of the house if possible ; and, as long as he had heart and health, he would never relax in his endeavours to do so.

I had letters from him by every post, and in return kept him constantly informed as to Mrs. Wilding's state of health ;

who, although recovering slowly, continued extremely delicate. At last I received one from him, informing me that he had now been enabled to put his affairs in such a state as to justify him in running down to the country for a week or two. He said that he congratulated himself in being able to accomplish this, as it would relieve him from the constant and extreme solicitude he had had about his wife, whose state of health had never, amidst all his other perplexities, been a moment from his thoughts ; besides, he felt that his own required attention and a change of scene, to strengthen him for more, and perhaps greater exertions.

On the second day after his arrival in the country, I had a visit from him at the bank office, when he narrated to me in detail the struggles he had had, and the wonders he had accomplished ; and produced a statement of his affairs, from which it appeared that, after taking into account his heavy losses, he had more than sufficient to pay all the creditors of the house, if time were allowed him to collect his debts and convert his property. And now he requested me candidly to advise him the course I thought he ought to pursue under the circumstances ; if possible, to avoid publicity, and the ordeal of being compelled to call a meeting of his creditors. I thought of many plans which might be adopted, to stave off the evil hour until matters could be arranged ; and at last an idea struck me which suggested a plan that appeared at all events feasible, and, whether it would be successful or not, it was worth trying.

"Why not," I said to Mr. Wilding, "apply to your wealthy aunt in Wales for her assistance in this emergency ? No one living has a stronger claim upon her ; and perhaps, as she has advanced in years, she may also have changed in nature, and now become a most amiable person, regretting from the bottom of her heart her shameful usage of her brother and her neglect of you, and perhaps, for what you know, panting for an opportunity to make some amends for her past conduct ere she leaves the world."

Mr. Wilding was silent for some time. At last he said, "You know I am not one to encourage feelings of doubt or distrust until a trial is made. I will therefore make the attempt, happen what may. She must be a person now very far advanced in life, and on that account may be the more induced to do a just and charitable act ; and, whenever

Mrs. Wilding is sufficiently recovered that I can leave home with comfort, I will certainly try what effect my rhetoric will have upon this antiquated piece of goods, who so unjustly occupies and enjoys that property which I should, in common fairness and by law, have possessed."

I had been from home for some time, and on my return I found amongst my letters one with the Bangor post-mark upon it, which proved to be from Mr. Wilding, who had got so far on his journey; he mentioned that he was only within six miles of his aunt's residence, and intended to start the following morning to pay his respects to her.

"I have been making some inquiries," he said, "and the reports I have received of her character is, that she is reputed very rich, but otherwise much in keeping with the impressions I have formed; and therefore shall not be disappointed if my reception is reserved, cold, or even repulsive. 'A man is a lion in his own cause,' and I at present imagine that *mine* is a good one, and will be found easy to plead, the appeal I have to make being irresistible to nature, affection, and justice."

Two days after receiving this epistle, I had another most extraordinary letter from him, which obliged me to hurry off to Wales at an hour's warning; and I shall narrate in his own words his adventures since we parted, with which he amused me on the evening of my joining him at Bangor.

"I started in the morning early," said Mr. Wilding, "in a rickety old gig, with a boy to guide me, to the seat of my ancestors, with the intention of breakfasting with my aunt. The place has all the bearings of having at one time been a noble residence, but it is now in a sad and deplorable state of neglect and dilapidation. The lodges, which are very imposing, are fine specimens of the style of architecture common at the time they were built, being a judicious blending betwixt the Arabic and the old Italian; the large pillars supporting the gates are surmounted by two lions rampant, and the whole range of building, retiring a considerable distance from the main road, forms a pretty extensive crescent.

"After some difficulty I got access to what had been a fine avenue of oaks and elms; but it was now so completely overgrown with furze and brushwood, that, without the trees to guide me, I could not possibly have traced my course. When I reached the mansion, which is a large stone demi-

castellated building, with a narrow turreted tower at each end, and having ascended a flight of spacious steps which led to the principal door, I could see no mode of communicating with the inmates, excepting what appeared to me to be a large dinner-bell, which was suspended from the outside of the house. I gave it a smart pull, which caused it to make a greater clamour than I intended, and in a few minutes a very antiquated-looking servant-man made his appearance, evidently in a bustle, and in the act of drawing on an old tawdry livery-coat, and respectfully requested to know what was my business. I mentioned to him that I was desirous to have an interview with Miss Wilding, and would feel obliged if he would inform her that I was a relative, and had come some distance to have the pleasure of a conversation with her; upon which he showed me into an old-fashioned library, where, in a few minutes, he returned with the desire from Miss Wilding, that I would send her my name and address. I sent my compliments to her, and requested the servant to say that I was Mr. Henry Wilding from London, the only son of her late brother, Colonel Wilding, of India. When left alone I had worked my mind up to the belief that I should have a favourable reception, and be successful in the object of my visit; but soon 'a change came o'er the spirit of my dream.' When I mentioned my name the old servant started with astonishment, and his countenance assumed an expression of joy, rapture, and wonder, that puzzled me to account for; and I imagined that I saw a tear start in his eye, when he exclaimed in (an ecstasy of delight), seizing me by the hand—

"'Excuse me—excuse me, sir; you are welcome home, sir—a thousand times welcome, sir!'

"The old man seemed almost beside himself; he ran to the door, opened, and shut it again.

"'Stop a bit,' he said; 'she is perhaps in one of her tantrums this morning, but I shall soon know. Anyhow you *shall* see her—that I am determined upon. God bless you—God bless you! this is a happy day for old Richard!' and he again vanished. In about five minutes he once more appeared, evidently in a most nervous and excited state.

"'Follow me, my dear master, and I will take you to her; but do not be annoyed with any thing she may say or do, as she has a strange temper, and very odd ways with her.'

"He conducted me through a long corridor, and at last brought me into a little saloon, which communicated by a glass door with a terrace at the back of the house, on which, in a large easy-chair, basking in the sun, was seated my aunt, employed in knitting some description of worsted work. She appeared, on my first impression, to be a hale, healthy old person, which proved to have been so, as I afterwards learned that she had never had an illness during her long life, which, from her appearance, I concluded had been extended over seventy-five or six winters. When I entered, she, with rather a forbidding mien, pointed to a garden-chair, and requested that I would be seated. Her contour of countenance (particularly a small, quick, ever-restless, and piercing black eye, with a fierce and tameless manner) was, at my first glance, far from encouraging; and, although evincing a powerful strength of mind, it was utterly devoid of all those graces and charming attributes that characterize the mild and gentle woman; combining in her composition a hard, unfeminine inflexibility of purpose, with a vixenish intensity of expression, which, one felt assured, had never been lit up by a smile, and, if it ever had, it must have been hideous and repulsive. If I might be permitted to use a parody—

'She never held her peace,
But let ill-humour, like a harsh catarrh,
Feed on her croaking lungs; she stamp'd and storm'd,
And with a sour, blear-eyed austerity,
She sat like Hecate on her besom,
Cursing a witch.'

"Discouraging as my reception was, I still determined to press my suit with all my power, and, if necessary, 'beard the tigress in her den.' I therefore first assumed the *sauviter in modo*, and began by congratulating her on her appearance of health, and consequent chance of longevity; observing that she had fair and reasonable hopes of enjoying life for the next ten or fifteen years.

"'I do not desire to be restricted,' she said in a very measured and determined tone of voice, putting strong emphasis on every word.

"Still, madam, we cannot be too thankful to the Almighty in permitting us to attain the extreme limit of life allotted to man; but the more particularly when, at the same time, in his mercy he blesses us with physical strength to

enjoy this world, whilst we are preparing for the next, even when the lamp of life is flickering.

"That is *my* affair, not *yours*, sir,' she replied; 'besides, what right have *you*, or any one, to make comments on *my* age or state of health?'

"I mentioned to her that I meant nothing offensive—my desire was to be respectful and courteous towards her.

"I want no such courtesy from any one,' she said, 'and more particularly from *you*. What has brought you here uninvited? It seems you have stated yourself to be the son of that scrapegrace brother of mine!'

"I instantly fired at this speech, sprung to my feet, and exclaimed (urged by the strongest feelings of indignation) that my father had lived and died an upright and honourable man, a brave soldier, and a lieutenant-colonel in the army, much esteemed and respected by all who knew him—that, unaided, he had by merit alone raised himself to such a high rank—and that it ill became his relations to traduce his memory, he having struggled and fought his way through life without any assistance from *them*; on the contrary, that they had done all in their power to thwart his plans and destroy his prospects; but I have a presentiment, I added, that there is a day of reckoning at hand.

"You presume on my retired habits,' she returned, 'to come and insult me even in my own mansion; but be wary how far you push this course of conduct, as you may find that I am not altogether unprotected.'

"Such, I assure you, madam, is far from my intention; and, should it so happen that you ever know further of me, you will learn that what you would charge me with, is contrary to my nature and character. I came to you, madam, with the olive-branch in my hand, and I now proffer it to you. If I have been hasty in the remarks I have made, which seem to have displeased you, I entreat you will pardon me; but, at the same time, you must excuse me if I request that, for the future, you will make no allusion to my beloved, honoured, and much lamented father, and *your* brother, whose memory I can never cease to revere and respect, but in terms worthy a son to hear and a sister to utter, for whom he cherished and maintained that affection to the last, and which ought to have existed through life betwixt an only brother and sister.

"'Your father disgraced his family,' she impatiently replied, 'by his connection with the person he called his wife, and consequently excluded himself from the pale of our family coterie; had he conducted himself according to the wishes of *his* father, he doubtless would have participated with myself in the large amount of property which he left, and which, in his wisdom, he settled exclusively upon an affectionate daughter, instead of on an undeserving and undutiful son. I again wish to know why you have dared to intrude yourself upon my privacy, and by what right or title you presume to address me in the terms you have done?'

"Before I can hold further converse with you, madam, I must once more repeat, that unless you can mention my father's name with respect, I cannot listen with patience to any further questions you may see fit to put to me, or to observations you may make. You would also now endeavour to detract from the character of my dear, innocent mother, who was one of the best, most amiable, and accomplished of persons. My father's non-succession to his paternal estates, I have little doubt, was caused by a wicked, undue, and baneful influence having been exercised upon a mind naturally weak; and those designs facilitated by the ready acquiescence, for peace's sake, in any proposal, however wicked and unjust, that might have been propounded to one weakened by protracted mental and physical disease, and subdued by the constant, systematic, and disgraceful machinations of those very limited few who were permitted to be in attendance upon him in his dying moments, and whose duty it ought to have been, to have corrected his errors of temper and judgment before he appeared in the presence of *Him* who will one day require an account of all deeds done in the flesh.

"'What, sir!' she screamed, 'do you mean to say that I used undue influence with my father in settling his worldly affairs in his dying moments?'

"I do, madam, most emphatically say so; and of which I have ample proofs, in the correspondence I found amongst my father's papers ten years after his death; and it is upon that I base my right and title, as the legitimate heir, to visit this abode of my ancestors, and to claim from you a compliance with that request which has principally induced me to wait upon you at this particular juncture.

"'Indeed!' she said, 'and pray what may your request be?'

"I understand, I replied, that, independent of the large fortune you succeeded to by my grandfather's side, during your lifetime you have been accumulating wealth to a large amount. You have not a relation living, that I am aware of, but myself. I have been also rich, but the vicissitudes and misfortunes to which all are liable, less or more, in a commercial life, have for the present placed me in an embarrassment which, without some prompt assistance, may be the means of my ruin, even although I am possessed of an amount of property which would doubly cover all my engagements. I therefore wish to know whether or not you will render me the pecuniary assistance I at present require, in the shape of a loan, which I solemnly engage, on the word of a man of honour and a gentleman, to return to you in two or three months at the utmost.

"She seemed to listen with great composure to all I said, until I mentioned my request, when she commenced twisting and pulling at her worsted work, until she had reduced it all to shreds and tatters.

"'What!' she cried, '*I* lend you money? Not one shilling, sir, if it were to save you from perdition! nor shall you, or any one connected with you, ever be benefited to the extent of one single farthing in any thing that I at present have, or ever may possess!'

"To this most unnatural speech, I said that I hoped she did not mean seriously to imply that her intentions and feelings were such as she expressed; and as the loan I required (I understood) could not inconvenience her, I was sure she would think better of it, and comply with my very reasonable request.

"Her little eyes seemed to flash fire; she raised herself partially on her feet, knocked her clenched fist vehemently on the work-table before her; and, with an emphasis that thrilled through my every nerve, in a croaking, remorseless tone of voice, she uttered the emphatic and conclusive word—'*Not!*'

"I have been often told, madam, I calmly replied, but never could have believed, that such feelings as you have displayed in this interview could have existed in your nature, or in the breast of any human being. Your coarse and unnatural conduct has been, and is, such as to exceed all belief. Were you holding intercourse with the world, and displaying

such a fiendish disposition as you seem to possess, you would be hooted from all civilized society, even were you as rich as Croesus. Possessing such a heartless soul, with all your wealth you cannot be envied, as it must debar you from that enjoyment (and all the true happiness) which springs from the affections and sympathies of our natures in this world, and assists us in our hopes of salvation in the next.

“Leave my presence instantly, sir !” she screamed, starting to her feet, ‘and never dare again to darken my door, or cross my threshold !’

“I will, madam, and be most thankful to do so ; carrying, however, with me the indelible impression of the estimate I have formed of your character, and with feelings of unspeakable distress in reflecting that a particle of that kindred blood which you inherit, and have polluted in *your* person, should flow through *my* veins. Farewell, madam ; your tenure of life is, in the common course of nature, now short. Take my advice—amend your ways, repent and make your peace with God, whose blessings you have abused, while the time is vouchsafed to you to do so.

“I then hastily walked into the saloon, through which I had entered, nearly knocking down old Richard, who had been listening at the door.

“‘I have heard all ye said,’ hurriedly, and in a whisper, said the old man ; ‘but, never mind, *her* time is coming. I have learned from the postboy where you are at present residing—I have something very important to speak to you about ; and, if you will permit me, I will come and see you at the inn, in the course of this evening. For your dear father’s sake, I would do much for you ; and have that in my power to communicate which may be of great service, and gain an end which, I pray, may be accomplished before I die.’

“Ignorant of what old Richard meant by these mysterious allusions, I thanked him for his kind wishes, and replied that I should be glad to see him ; and, having put a trifle in his hand, drove back to my inn, in no very enviable state of mind.”

CHAPTER III.—MARVELLOUS EVENTS.

"WHILST seated in my little parlour, at breakfast, in the course of finishing my last cup of coffee, and whilst brooding over all my woes, the waiter hurriedly entered the room, and said—

"‘The sale, sir, is just going to commence, and Mr. Price sends his compliments, and will feel obliged if you can soon make it convenient to attend.’

"Having delivered this, to me most inexplicable, message, he as quickly disappeared. Ten minutes more had scarcely elapsed, when he again entered and intimated to me that the time was up; that the company waited for me in the next room, and the sale must certainly now proceed.

"This is evidently a mistake, I concluded. However, I will join them; it may assist in passing the time, and, perhaps, wean me for a little from my otherwise distracting thoughts. So I followed the man, who introduced me into a room, where I found about eight or ten persons assembled. I appeared to be treated by all with considerable respect, as many of them rose to their feet and saluted me as I entered. A gentlemanly, merry, bustling, and professional-looking little man, about two or three years my senior, came up and shook me by the hand, asking me if I ever had been in that part of the country before, to which I answered in the negative; and, whilst we were conversing on general subjects, the auctioneer having taken his seat, and placed before him a large sand-glass, addressed the company—‘We will proceed to business, if you please.’

"‘Now, gentlemen,’ he continued, ‘I imagine I do not require to explain to you the circumstances under which this fine estate is to be sold. You are already aware that the proprietor died without a settlement, and without legitimate heirs or any legal claimants, excepting those pretensions that the gentleman who has just arrived, and who is now present, may prove. It is therefore ordered by the court, which fixed this day and hour, that the estate shall be sold, for the purpose of paying off the mortgage debt, which amounts only to £15,000, for what it will bring over and above this sum; and, I imagine, no very great opposition will be offered to

that gentleman, who claims kindred with the deceased, and who has come such a distance to attend this sale. I now put up the property at £15,000. You are aware that the rental, in good times, has exceeded £4000 per annum, and now amounts, with all the disadvantages attending it, and with a respectable tenantry, to £2500.'

"A total silence now prevailed; not a word was uttered, but all eyes seemed to be turned towards me; and for upwards of twenty minutes this taciturnity continued. At last the auctioneer, addressing me, said—

"'Now, sir, your time is about gone—the glass has only two minutes to run. I shall require an advance upon the upset price—what say you?'

"Pinned thus, as it were, into a corner, I became confused, perplexed, embarrassed, and paralyzed; but, at the same time, had a vivid and painful perception of the singular position in which I was placed—with an uncontrollable curiosity to know how this extraordinary enigma would be solved, and what it would all end in. I therefore mustered a sort of negative courage, feeling as if forced on by an unaccountable impulse—and, with a firm voice, called out 'fifteen thousand, five hundred pounds!'

"'Just in time, sir,' said the auctioneer, and down went his hammer. 'Bellmount estate is yours, sir,' he added, 'on your payment within a week of the usual deposit of five per cent; and Mr. Price, the law-agent, will arrange with you as to the transfer of the deeds,' &c.

"I was bewildered, astounded, and stupefied when the before-mentioned merry little gentleman stepped up, and, with many congratulations, shook me heartily by the hands.

"'You are in great luck, sir; you have become the proprietor of one of the finest properties in this country. I have the management of the legal business connected with it, and shall be glad to confer with you, as soon as you can make it convenient to settle the preliminaries.'

"In a condition almost painful, not knowing well what to think, or how to act, under such extraordinary circumstances, I could scarcely reply to him. At last I said, I should be glad to do so, and that he might fix his own time.

"'Suppose we dine together,' he said.

"I replied that I should esteem it a favour if he would be

my guest, and take his chance for the sort of repast that the house could provide.

" 'With the greatest pleasure in the world ; and, although we cannot boast of French cookery in our poor country, we can give you here some fine Welsh mutton, which is better in my opinion than any venison—salmon fresh from the stream, and game without end. But leave the management of the dinner to me,' he said, laughing ; 'I will arrange all to your satisfaction. I must, however, leave you for the present, as I have some urgent work that may detain me for an hour or two, but will be with you again at four by the tick of the clock.'

" Mr. Price (for such I was informed was his name) made his appearance punctually at the hour he fixed. I found him a very communicative and intelligent person, though somewhat eccentric ; he seemed to know the whole country and its inhabitants for many miles round. Amongst others, he mentioned the name of my aunt with no great respect ; he said that none of the gentry visited her—that she must have saved an immense amount of wealth, as her ill-gotten property was well-tenanted, and that the vile old wretch, Morgan, who had acted as her attorney from the time of her father's death, took great care of her cash for her, it being generally supposed that she intended to leave him all at her death—'that is to say,' he said with a laugh, 'if I do not get him hanged in the mean time.'

" As may be imagined, I heard all this with no little interest.

" We had finished an excellent dinner, and had partaken of two or three glasses of fair old port, when Mr. Price suggested that we should now combine the *utile et dulce*, to which I readily assented.

" 'Then, Mr. Cavendish,' he said, producing pen, ink, and paper, 'will you have the goodness to favour me with your christian name, business, and address ?'

" Nonplussed at this question, I was quite at a loss what to reply, or how to act ; but truth and candour I have always found to be the best and shortest way to get out of such a difficulty. So at last, with some embarrassment, I told him the whole circumstances exactly as they had occurred, and that I knew nothing of, and was quite unconnected with, *any* Mr. Cavendish, at which my little friend burst into a most

immoderate fit of laughter; and, when he had somewhat ceased, he exclaimed—

“ ‘Well, in the whole course of my practice, this is the most extraordinary affair that I have ever experienced; but the property is yours, sir, to all intents and purposes, if you pay the deposit money within the given time. The fact is, we have been in correspondence for some months with a Mr. Cavendish, who gave us a vague and undefined idea that he was some distant connection of the deceased, but he produced no satisfactory proof whatever. He wrote me that he would be present to-day at the sale, and for some reason or other, not having appeared, you have been all along mistaken for him,’ and Mr. Price again indulged in another hearty laugh, in which I could not resist joining him.

“ ‘Now,’ said he, ‘we must have another bottle of wine on this discovery; but, in the mean time, have the goodness to let me know whom I really have the pleasure of speaking to.’

“ ‘I flatter myself,’ I replied, ‘that when I inform you, I shall not lose in your estimation, nor shall I, as a new proprietor, take from the respectability of the neighbourhood, as I believe my family is too well and favourably known in it, having possessed property in the country for several centuries. My name is Henry Wilding, merchant in London.

“ ‘What!’ said Mr. Price with impatience, ‘the son of Colonel Wilding, who died in India?’

“ ‘The same, sir.

“ ‘Upon which the little man, in an ecstasy of delight, started to his feet, upset the chair he had been seated on, and commenced dancing in a most insane manner around it, singing at the pitch of his voice, ‘Tol de roll oll, de roll.’

“ ‘When he had become a little more composed, and recovered sufficient breath to speak, I prayed him for goodness’ sake to enlighten me on the subject of his excessive enthusiasm.

“ ‘Why,’ he said, ‘I have been looking for you every where for the last ten years, and have at last found you in this strange manner. Toll de roll oll, de roll, &c. &c. &c.

“ ‘When I inform you that you are the true and rightful heir to the family property of Wildmount, which that she-devil your aunt, and that imp of Satan, Morgan, now enjoy, you will not wonder at my delight at seeing you, and being enabled to congratulate you on your good fortune.

"Your aunt and Morgan, between them, forged your grandfather's will; he never could bring his mind to make one, even on his death-bed. I can prove the crime by the best of evidence; but principally by old Richard Hood, the servant, who was brought up in the family with your father as boys together—he knows all. We must send for him immediately."

"He had not well uttered the words when the veritable Richard Hood walked into the room."

"Why," said Price, "the plot thickens; this is all like witchcraft—not for a moment insinuating that *you* have been practising the black art, Mr. Wilding; but is it not odd that he should just appear at the moment we wanted him?"

"Come along, old fellow! you never could be more welcome. Mr. Wilding has this morning purchased Bellmount; and I want you to tell him what you know, and what you have told me so often. Mention all the particulars touching the making of your old master's will."

"Well, sir," he said, "he never signed a will when in life. A week before he died, he was quite incapable of executing any deed, or signing any paper, although Morgan tried all he could to compel him to do so, when life was nearly extinct. What they call his last settlement was managed after his death; the alleged signature was traced with the dead man's fingers, by Morgan. I saw it done; and neither of them have ever had the least suspicion that I was behind a screen in the room at the time, and heard all their diabolical plans; besides, sir, my signature to the attestation is a forgery. I can swear I never could or would sign it, although entreated to do so. I fear there is some devilry in the wind even now," continued Richard, "as Morgan has been closeted with my mistress ever since Mr. Wilding left."

"I then told Mr. Price those particulars which caused my visit to Wales, and the result of my morning's interview with my aunt."

"Just what I would have expected," he said. "But we must lose no time; and the greatest caution and secrecy will be necessary."

"What course do you mean to pursue? I asked."

"Why, immediately to get a warrant for the arrest of Morgan, and bring him before a magistrate; and put a dis-

tringas upon all lands, cash, plate, goods, and chattels of every description, and all the benefits arising therefrom, alleged to belong to your aunt, but criminally and fraudulently possessed by her for the last twenty-three years. And it strikes me you will find, independent of the Wildmount estate, that you will come into an immense accumulation of arrears of rent, and other funds.'

"But can I attach her savings?

"To be sure you can—every penny.'

"What, her personal property?

"All—all is yours; and, moreover, every sixpence she has spent in her own living for twenty-three years, she must account for and refund.'

"Now, Richard,' he said, addressing the old man, 'you had better hurry home, for fear of exciting suspicion of our doings. We shall want you again to-morrow, with old Nelly the nurse, who also can swear what she saw and heard. I will send a chaise, that will be waiting for you at the inn, at nine o'clock in the morning, to convey you and her to Bangor, where the examination of Morgan must take place. Now, be off; there's a good old fellow! but first cast this down your throat,' handing him a bumper of brandy.

"Now, sir,' he said to me, after Richard had taken his departure, 'things are all in as fair a train as we could wish; and to-morrow, I expect, will work wonders. You had better, this evening, communicate with your friends, informing them what has occurred, and requesting them to send you the needful in due course, to pay the deposit on the purchase of Bellmount. You have plenty of time, as the post does not leave this until late; and I will see you again in good time in the morning, to enable us to proceed with the business we have in hand, which you must admit is of no little importance.'"

When Mr. Price had left him, Mr. Wilding sat down and wrote me the letter before alluded to, of which the annexed is a copy—

"W—TOWN, NEAR BANGOR, *September* —, 18—.

"MY DEAR G—,

"Do not, I entreat of you, regard me as a confirmed and hopeless lunatic (as the extraordinary communication that I am about to make would almost warrant you

in doing); but events have occurred to me within the last twelve hours, of a nature which leave far in the distance any story of romance, or the wildest description of fiction that you perhaps ever read or heard of. I can scarcely bring myself to believe, even yet, but that it is all a dream; still the proofs that lie before me confirm the reality. My time will not permit me to explain to you the particulars; but rely upon it, that I never was more sane or collected in my life, when I inform you, first—that, from the strongest and most incontrovertible evidence, I have discovered that I am the only true and rightful heir to 'Wildmount,' the fine and extensive estate of my ancestors; and also, by means the most marvellous, I have, I may say unconsciously, been made the purchaser, for almost a nominal sum, of the splendid property of Bellmount, near this place. Do, I beseech you, if you can possibly leave home for a few days, come to me here, *immediately on receipt*, as I never required your good counsel so much as at present.

"I will run down from this place to Bangor, and wait your arrival. You will also be so good as kindly to debit my account with £1000, the greatest portion of which I shall require to pay within a week from this date, as the usual deposit of five per cent. on the purchase I have made; which have the goodness, therefore, to bring with you. In haste, believe to remain—Yours most truly,

"HENRY WILDING."

"Now!" said Mr. Wilding, when he had finished this extraordinary romance; "what is your opinion of it all?"

"Why," I replied, "except offering you my sincere congratulations on your having, within such a short period, had such a complete revulsion of your fortune, and being so startled at your account of the events that have taken place, I find myself incapable of giving you to-night any calm advice, or of even expressing my sentiments on a subject fraught with so much importance. Your old termagant aunt must be made to disgorge her ill-gotten wealth, and no doubt your friend Price will know best how to go about it."

"Poor old wretch!" said Mr. Wilding, "I should be sorry, indeed, if any thing harsh were done towards her: Price has an old grudge to settle with her, and I am afraid, if left to himself, he may push matters to an extent that I may have

cause to regret. For all the little time left her in this world, would it not be better for me to allow her to remain in possession of Wildmount? she cannot in the course of nature live long."

"I beg your pardon," I returned; "a creaking gate hangs long on its hinges. Give her an annuity if you please, but turn her out of the place; such wickedness as that (of which she has been guilty), calls for punishment even in this world. Keep her from absolute starvation, but nothing more—if you take my advice. From the description you have just given me of your interview with her, I cannot imagine a more diabolical nature than hers: the fact is—'Women are all in extremes; they are either better or worse than men.' But when Price comes in the morning we will discuss this, and other matters even more urgent and important."

Mr. Price made his appearance at our quarters at an early hour on the following day; and, almost immediately after him, followed Richard Hood and Nelly Jones, when we were all conveyed in a post-chaise to Bangor; and, upon the affidavits of the two latter before a magistrate, a warrant was issued for the apprehension of Jacob Morgan, for forgery, fraud, and embezzlement; and an injunction was also the same morning served upon Miss Anne Wilding, spinster, to restrain her from any further receiving rents, or in any way intermeddling with the stock, moveables, goods and chattels, in or about the mansion, or on any portion of the estate of Wildmount; and also a notice to quit the premises within one month, with a demand to refund all arrears of rent with interest, from the day she criminally took possession of the property.

In the course of the evening we saw Morgan, in the custody of two sheriff's officers, being driven past our windows, when he was safely lodged in prison.

When the person who served the injunction on Miss Wilding reached Wildmount, he had considerable difficulty in obtaining a personal interview with her, and but for the assistance of old Richard, would have been obliged to return without succeeding in his object; however, he so managed matters, that when the officer was introduced she had no suspicion of any unpleasant business.

When she perused the documents which were handed to her, she seemed at first perfectly stupefied, changed colour,

and stared wildly around ; at last she recovered herself, and was seized with a frenzy of rage ; she stamped with her feet, foamed at the mouth, and, with the most revolting distortion of countenance, shrieked out—

“It is a lie—a d——d lie ! There is no one who can prove it—it is a vile and hellish plot to ruin me ! Richard Hood !” she screamed, “send for Mr. Morgan to come to me immediately !”

“I am sorry to say,” said Richard, “that any message sent to him will be unavailing, as he was this morning apprehended on a charge of forgery and fraud, and is now a prisoner in the county jail !”

This intelligence seemed to sober her down a little ; she appeared as if stunned, she clasped her hands together, her head dropped upon her breast, and she remained silent for two or three minutes ; at last she said calmly—almost in a whisper—

“Leave me to myself ; I must commune alone, and wrestle with this villanous plot in private.”

On the following morning, on the servant going up to Miss Wilding's bedroom, she found her stretched upon the floor in a state of insensibility, and unable to move a limb ; she had been seized with a fit of paralysis during the night, and had somehow scrambled out of bed. She was immediately placed upon a couch, and restoratives used ; and by the time the medical man who was sent for arrived, she was a little recovered. Feeling now unmistakeable symptoms that the cold gauntlet of death was upon her, her guilty conscience, with all its horrors, seemed to drive her almost to distraction. She screamed aloud, calling for help from every quarter excepting that one where an appeal is never made in vain, but is heard in mercy, even at the eleventh hour, for the greatest sinner. In her ravings, she made a full confession of her crimes in presence of the doctor, the steward on the estate, and all the servants who surrounded her bed. She rallied about midday, when she became calm and collected, and requested that Mr. Wilding might be sent for, that she might confess all her iniquities to him, but, ere he arrived, her soul had winged its flight, and gone to its long account.

I accompanied Mr. Wilding to Wildmount, and, when this event was communicated to us, we remained only for a very short time, merely giving instructions for the necessary pre-

parations for the funeral, and again returned in the evening to Bangor.

It was late ere I arrived the night previous, and I felt much fatigued from the jolting over wretched roads such a distance, with poor horses and in crazy old post-chaises; but this did not prevent me from listening with patience and intense interest to the details of the marvellous events in Mr. Wilding's history of the preceding days, as narrated above. Having consequently, from over-fatigue and excitement, had but little rest that night, I retired early on the following one, leaving Mr. Wilding and Mr. Price in consultation, the latter of whom stated he had discovered that the old woman had accumulated cash to the extent of upwards of one hundred thousand pounds. When informed of this in the morning, I told Mr. Wilding that I attributed his good fortune to a signal interposition of Divine Providence, as a reward for his honourable conduct in prosperity, for that patient endurance with unwearied industry, and his unrepining fortitude in adversity, which had marked his whole career through life.

CHAPTER IV.—THE FOUNDLING'S TALE.

MR. PRICE, when we were quietly enjoying our wine in the evening, informed us of all the particulars connected with the Bellmount estate. He told us that poor Mr. Cavendish had purchased it only about four years previously; so that he did not live long to enjoy it. He had been a great improver—having planted very extensively, and with good judgment; but his attention had been more particularly directed to the alterations and embellishments of the mansion-house, and to beautifying the grounds in its immediate vicinity. "Poor fellow!" said Mr. Price, "he died when he had just completed all his improvements, and was cut off very suddenly, without a friend or relative he knew of to lay his head in the grave. I believe I was the most intimate and only confidential friend he had in the world."

"Did you ever learn," I said, "any of his antecedents prior to his settling at Bellmount?"

"Why, yes! He one evening told me all in confidence, which, now he is gone, I need not hesitate to relate. It is

a very wonderful tale, but no less strange than true; and I shall endeavour to tell it to you in as nearly his own words as I can remember. He was a splendid man in personal appearance, with an easy gentlemanly dignity of manner; was entirely divested of all hauteur, and his amiability of temper was such that he was almost idolized by the poorer classes, who had access to him at all times; and if in want they never left him unrelieved. I always said, and never will believe otherwise, that noble blood flowed in his veins. This is, however, digressing; and I will proceed with the story as narrated to him, when he was about fourteen years of age, by the old woman, the occasional nurse to the establishment, and wife to the porter of the Foundling Hospital gate"—

It was a cold Christmas night in the year 18—, and a good deal of snow had fallen in the course of the day; but the sky had brightened up during the evening, and the moon had burst forth in all its splendour, with scarcely a cloud to be seen in the horizon. John and I had made ourselves some hot spiced ale, with eggs and a small spark of hollands in it, which we had been enjoying by the fireside, and which had induced us to sit up a little longer out of bed than usual. We might have been about ten minutes in bed, and both of us were just dropping off to sleep, when the porter's bell was rung with such violence as you never heard, and immediately afterwards a carriage drove off at full speed from the door.

"What can that be?" says I to John.

"Never you mind, Polly!" says he. "Go to sleep; it is some mischievous young men, no doubt, who have been out spending their Christmas, and are returning home."

"I am not so sure of that, John," says I.

"But I am, Polly," says he, "so compose yourself—don't bother me, and let's have no more nonsense;" (for John, although he was a good man to me, was very short in his temper.) However, I could not rest, and had not lain much longer when I distinctly heard the cry of an infant.

"Rise, John," I then said, "this precious moment; there's something in the wicket."

After a great deal of fuss, he said—"Well, Polly, I will

get up to please you, but it's of no use ;" so he hurriedly dressed himself, and out he went. He had not been gone two minutes when I heard him cry—"Polly, come here as fast as you can ;" so I wrapped myself as well and as quickly up as I could, and when I got out, I met John coming in with a large bundle in his hands. He said—"Here is something for us, Polly, out of the common," and to be sure, lo, and behold ! there was a beautiful span-new white wicker basket.

"Bring it in, John," I said, "as quickly as you can ;" but we couldn't get a light struck for a considerable time—the fire had gone out, and the tinder was damp, and I thought that we should never have managed. At last, when we did get a candle lit, and opened up all the bindings of the basket, there we found one of the sweetest babes I ever cast eyes upon.

"Bless its dear little heart," said John, "I'll give it a few drops of the spiced ale we left—I will," and it sucked it in as if it had been its mother's milk ; and this was the very first nourishment, I believe, it had got in this world.

Well, when we untied its bucklings, we found it was dressed in the finest soft flannel and cambric muslin, and over all was wrapped a large veil of the richest Brussels lace ; around its blessed little right arm was tied a bank note for five hundred pounds, and around its left arm a large piece of paper, on which was written—"Alfred Cavendish."

"Is not this grand ?" says I to John.

"Yes it is grand, Polly—*very* ; but we must take it up to the hospital immediately."

"Indeed, I shall do nothing of the kind, John !" says I, and we had a complete skrimmage about it.

"I have often told you, Polly, that you would get me into mischief with your positive ways."

"Positive ways !" says I, "would you have me take the innocent babe out in the cold at this time o' night ? Indeed, I'll do nothing of the sort—'tis as much as its life is worth ;" so he went to his bed without saying another word, and I sat by the fireside with this little blessed beauty at my bosom the whole night through, having made it some food, which it took most greedily.

When morning came I put the baby into the little basket again, and carried it up to the lady matron—and ay ! but she was proud of it. It fortunately so happened that a fine young

woman, the wife of a carpenter in the neighbourhood, had been confined only ten days previously, and her child had just died. She had a great quantity of milk, and was suffering much from the want of her infant to relieve her of it ; so she was very thankful when the council ordered her that day to be sent for, to nurse little Alfred.

"These are all the particulars in her own vernacular," said Mr. Cavendish to me, "that I received from good old Polly ; and memorandums of her conversations with me on this interesting subject I always made at the time."

Polly survived old John, her husband, six years, during which time I took care that she never wanted the means of making her comfortable. I have no recollection of any thing that occurred before I was about four years of age, when I was carried occasionally to see my foster-mother, who seemed fully as kind to me as if I had been her own child. I grew up a strong healthy boy, and I was told that I was very quick at learning. The interest of the five hundred pounds, in addition to the funds of the hospital, enabled the council to give me the advantage of the first masters in the different branches of education ; and I believe, in this respect, nothing was neglected that I evinced any turn or talent for.

At this period, when the war was raging over the continent, a martial spirit pervaded the whole kingdom ; almost every able-bodied man served his majesty in some shape or other : even little boys were encouraged to play at soldiering, and form themselves into little battalions under the superintendence of some superannuated old sergeant ; and these regiments frequently proved the nucleus of, in after years, efficient and well-organized volunteers. One of these little corps was established by the boys at the hospital, in which I performed a conspicuous part ; we were armed with pikes, by which we were taught the manual and platoon exercise ; we had also our little band of music, and a day was set apart for public inspection once a week, which was generally attended by a large concourse of gentry. On one of these occasions we had got our new belts and caps, and looked very smart indeed ; I had been appointed captain-commandant, and on that particular occasion we acquitted ourselves more than usually well. After the review I was called to the front, as commanding-officer, to receive the compliments, for our efficiency as young warriors, of the old general officer who had inspected

us. It was rather a trying event for one unaccustomed to be addressed by strangers. He was surrounded by a large concourse of ladies and gentlemen, whose eyes were all directed towards me; I was asked my name, &c., and I heard the secretary of the institution give a gentleman my whole history, from the time I had been left at the gate, with all the circumstances attending it. He seemed to have taken a great fancy to me, and frequently afterwards called, making particular inquiries about me, and generally bringing with him some little useful present, that he thought would be acceptable to me.

I had attained my fifteenth year, when one day I saw Mr. Melville (for that was the gentleman's name who had been so kind) walk into the hospital, and in about half-an-hour afterwards I was requested to attend at the council-room. When I entered, the chairman (Mr. Heath), addressing me, said—"Cavendish, we have for some time had it in consideration to place you in respectable employment, but our plans this morning have been a little altered regarding you, in consequence of a proposal and very kind offer which has been made by Mr. Melville, and which we all are disposed to entertain favourably; and it will now remain with yourself to say, whether or not it suits your own ideas, and is in every respect in accordance with your views. Mr. Melville, whom we all know, and who is engaged in commercial business, is just about to embark for Ceylon, where he intends to remain a number of years; he has kindly offered, if you don't object, to take you with him, educate you in his own business, and eventually give you a share in it, should you prove deserving."

I, without the least hesitation, accepted this tempting offer, and, having made my best acknowledgments to Mr. Melville and the council for all their kindness to me, I, after the lapse of a couple of months, having completed my outfit, and taken farewell of all my friends in the hospital, and had an affecting parting with my foster-mother, joined Mr. Melville at Gravesend, where we embarked for Ceylon.

I remained in that country for nearly fifteen years, during which time I became an industrious and active man of business. Mr. Melville was a bachelor, and we lived together in the greatest possible happiness until his death, which took place ten years after he had settled in the colony.

He left me a considerable amount of property, with which I increased the business ; and, having made sufficient to afford me every comfort for the remainder of my life, I determined, though still a young man, to wind up my affairs and return to England. I saw Bellmount advertised for sale ; and, as you know, it took my fancy, and I very soon became its purchaser.

"Have you never learned," I said to him one day, "or had any suspicion, who your parents were?"

"At one period of my life," he replied, "with the assistance of a noble friend, certain events came to my knowledge that took place about the time of my birth, which, with facts, dates, and many circumstances in connection with them, leave little doubt in my mind whose offspring I am ; but these circumstances, unless they are made known to me spontaneously from the quarter from which they ought to come, with an avowal of their truth to the world, shall go with me to the grave." And they did so, as Mr. Cavendish died suddenly of inflammation of the lungs, and his loss I have had much reason to deplore.

Mr. Price having finished this very interesting and romantic narrative, and I having arranged with him to accompany us, early on the following day, to take a formal possession of Wildmount, we parted for the night.

With his usual punctuality he made his appearance, and we spent the entire day in surveying and perambulating over the two properties, which far surpassed, in our opinions, in beauty and extent, even the high description that Mr. Price had given us of them. We returned to Bangor in the evening, where, with my assistance, we settled a number of necessary matters of business, in connection with Mr. Wilding's affairs, in paying the deposit money, &c., on the purchase of Bellmount. We also appointed Mr. Price agent and superintendent on both estates ; and the Wildmount steward, of whom he gave us a high character, was also continued in office. Annuities were settled on two old faithful servants, Richard Hood and Nelly Jones, as a reward for their fidelity, and for the distinct evidence they gave at the trial of the miscreant attorney, Morgan, who was transported for life.

I accompanied Mr. Wilding in performing the last obsequies to his aunt. He laid her in the family tomb. Few attended the funeral beyond Mr. Price, the steward, and one or two of

the tenantry. Not a tear was shed over her grave, a lamentation uttered, or a sigh of regret given. We left her to moulder—

"In that vile dust from whence she sprung,
Unblest, unhonour'd, and unsung."

On returning to our little inn, we found a gentleman had arrived in our absence, and had been making particular inquiries for Mr. Price. This proved to be the missing Mr. Cavendish, who had been prevented from reaching the day previous on account of some accident on the road. His appearance was not particularly prepossessing, and his manners were coarse, abrupt, and vulgar. He introduced himself to us when he entered, handing us his card, upon which appeared his name and business-calling, viz.—"George Frederick Henry Augustus Cavendish—Hosier, Fleet Street." He did not long delay in informing us of the object of his journey; and when we told him that the sale of Bellmount had taken place the previous day, and had been purchased by the proprietor of the adjoining estate, he seemed very much mortified and disappointed, but comforted himself with the observation—"That it was perhaps better, after all, that it was so, as he was sure he never could have been happy if not engaged in business, and away from the sound of Bow bells."

On inquiry, we found that his pretensions to relationship with the late Mr. Cavendish were altogether vague, chimerical, and fantastic.

Having remained for about ten days with my friend in North Wales, during which time we occupied ourselves in giving various directions as to improvements on the mansion-house of Wildmount, necessary for the reception of the family, we returned home together; and a week afterwards Mr. and Mrs. Wilding left for London—the former to wind up his commercial affairs, and the latter, who had now quite recovered her health, to make arrangements as to the furniture now necessary for Wildmount. She and her infant, in consequence of the news which had been sent to her from time to time of the sudden and extraordinary change in her husband's fortunes, became restored and recruited both in mind and body: the only alloy to her happiness was, the solicitude about her brother, whom she had not heard from

or of for such a length of time ; however, both hers and her husband's minds were soon relieved to a great extent on this subject, by a visit which Mrs. Wilding received one evening, when seated at her work alone in her drawing-room in Harley Street, when the servant announced a young lady as Miss Amelia Courtenay. Her appearance was most prepossessing—she seemed to be about twenty years of age, and was altogether of that character of beauty whose expression fascinates at first sight, and which had the semblance of an incarnation of the sweetest gentleness and goodness ; she was rather tall and finely proportioned, and was dressed in the most perfect taste. Her large blue eyes sparkled with intelligence when she spoke, and her manners indicated that she had mixed much in society, and with the best portion of it. She entered the room with apparent embarrassment and agitation. Mrs. Wilding requested her to be seated, which she had scarcely done when she was seized with a paroxysm of excitement. After the first feeling of emotion had subsided, she apologised for taking the liberty of making, what must appear, a most extraordinary intrusion, and for having allowed her agitation to find vent as she had done ; but remarked that Mrs. Wilding's strong family likeness was so striking to him, on the subject of whom she had been so very bold as to call, and whose cause she came to plead, that it had proved more for her feelings than she fancied she could bear. After a few encouraging words from Mrs. Wilding, she was at last enabled to inform her, that an attachment had for a long time existed between her and her brother—that she was cognizant of all his faults and failings, and attributed his more serious offences to the seductions and machinations of the several vile and unprincipled associates, with whom he had got so unfortunately connected wherever he went—that, from his artless simplicity of nature, and unsuspecting disposition, he had been made an easy prey in all their schemes to plunder, and drove him to commit acts which, in his sober moments, he would have revolted from and spurned. The object of her call, she said, was in consequence of a letter she had received from Mr. Holt that morning, enclosing the certificate she held in her hand from the colonel of his regiment, which, she was assured, would afford her the highest gratification ; and Frederick had expressed himself in the strongest terms of the great anxiety

he had to be reconciled to Mr. Wilding and herself, and to prove by his future conduct that he was still worthy of her affection and regard.

Miss Courtenay handed the paper to Mrs. Wilding, who read as follows; and, whilst doing so, both now were overcome by the sympathies of their natures, and freely indulged by giving expression to their feelings in a violent flood of tears.

“HEADQUARTERS, 7TH HUSSARS, BOMBAY, 18—.

“These are to certify that Cornet Frederick Holt has served for nearly three years in this regiment. For fully the half of that period he acted as my private secretary, and from his general good conduct, attention to the finance business of the corps, and gentlemanly behaviour, was raised from the ranks, and presented without purchase to a cornetcy. From his having acquired a perfect knowledge of the Hindustani language, he has been several times intrusted with important missions to the native princes, which he has conducted to the entire approval of the government; and it is expected, from the length of time he has served, and the casualties that have taken place, that he will be promoted to his lieutenancy in the course of a month.

“It affords me the more sincere pleasure thus to tender my entire approval of Mr. Holt’s conduct since he joined the regiment, being aware of the peculiar circumstances attending that event.

“REGINALD SPENCER, *Lieutenant-Colonel.*”

Mrs. Wilding and Miss Courtenay had scarcely finished the perusal of this most gratifying document, when Mr. Wilding stepped in, and was not a little astonished on finding his wife and a young lady, whose face was strange to him, bathed in tears. The circumstances of Miss Courtenay’s visit were soon explained to him, and on perusing the certificate from his colonel, in which his favourite was so much extolled (a copy of which he immediately forwarded to me), he felt an amount of pleasure such as he seldom or never had before experienced. He thanked Miss Courtenay for her kindness in calling with such gratifying news, informing her that they should all write Mr. Holt congratulatory letters by the next mail. Miss Courtenay expressed in the

strongest terms the happiness she had felt, not only in their reception of her, but also in the prospect of having been the means of effecting a reconciliation between such truly affectionate hearts.

"Pray," said Mrs. Wilding, "might I inquire how long your attachment to my brother has existed, and whether your friends are aware of the circumstance?"

Miss Courtenay, with much diffidence and timidity, but with great frankness, replied, that their affection for each other was an old story, and had commenced when Mr. Holt was a school-boy at Harrow, near which her father had a country-seat. "Our assignations," she said, "which always took place in the evenings, were managed with much caution and secrecy; and, during that time, I do not think that any member of my family had the least suspicion of what was going on between us, and ripening into as ardent feelings of love and affection as ever entered two young hearts. When I heard of his leaving the school under such an imputation (although I was thoroughly convinced that he was made the instrument and victim of others), it was almost the means of my death. I was seized with a nervous fever, from which I did not recover for weeks. I knew the wicked youth who had led him astray and made him his dupe, and felt this the more that I had not the opportunity of putting Frederick upon his guard against him. It was this young fiend who dragged him through all the scenes of dissipation and extravagance with which you are acquainted, and introduced him to those associates who led him step by step to crime, which, but for your prudent, prompt, and determined interference in stopping his career, might have led to a termination, the thought of which makes me tremble even yet. I saw him frequently when he was pursuing his wicked courses, and I entreated, reasoned, and prayed of him to desist, and withdraw himself from such a vicious crew as those he now called friends. He always promised me with sincerity and tears he would do so, but I never had well left him when he was again allured back to their society; they had got him too firmly entangled in the meshes of their net, nor did they allow him to escape until he was thoroughly plucked. The last time I saw him was at Doncaster during the races, when we had a long and affecting interview; his eyes by this time had been partially opened, but self-reproach had almost

driven him to desperation. He told me all he had done, and said he never could look his brother and sister again in the face, feeling assured that he never could obtain their forgiveness for his aggravated offences, and threatened to do something that would make a finish to his career ; but my love for him became the stronger as his misfortunes increased. My father (Mr. Richard Courtenay, a banker in the city) and my mother were now fully aware of our attachment, and watched me so closely that I was never permitted to see him ; and, mad with remorse, he put the threat he had made into execution, and enlisted as a common soldier. His desperate conduct—his visit to you and desertion—you are aware of : the punishment he received was merely confinement for a few days, after which he seemed entirely changed. We met once clandestinely before his regiment embarked for India, and at our parting I thought my heart would have broken. I never saw him look so handsome as I thought he did in his hussar dress. We have been in constant correspondence since ; I write to him by every mail, and I am now permitted to do so without restraint—indeed, with the approval of my parents.”

Mr. Wilding informed her that he knew her father, Mr. Courtenay, in business well, and would certainly lose no time in calling and paying his respects to him ; and he was sure that Mrs. Wilding, under such interesting circumstances, would be delighted to make the acquaintance of her mother ; in the mean time, he hoped that she would now be no stranger at Harley Street. This, she said, would afford her the greatest pleasure, and promised on her next visit to bring some of Mr. Holt's latest letters for Mrs. Wilding's perusal.

She again reverted, with many apologies, to the liberty she had taken in her visit, and trusted that from such a step she would not be thought immodest or unmaidenly. When Mr. Wilding returned, after having handed Miss Courtenay to her carriage, his wife, with a countenance sparkling with delight, said—“Well, what is your opinion of our poor Frederick's choice ?”

“I am much pleased, indeed, with the young lady,” he replied, “and have no doubt that she will make him a most excellent wife ; as nature in every respect has been most bountiful in having blessed her with both brains and beauty.”

I have often had occasion, in those short narratives, to remark what has frequently passed under my own observation—that where an ardent and sincere love and affection existed, the tenderness and unrepining fortitude of woman is unwearied, and the steady and persevering firmness of the female heart (when once excited by the purity of sincere love) unbounded. I afterwards learned that Amelia Courtenay had proved herself to be a most striking instance in this respect, possessing that beautiful and delicate characteristic in its fullest extent.

In a few days both Mr. and Mrs. Wilding called upon the Courtenays, for which Amelia had prepared them; and they now all arrived at one opinion, that Frederick, having sown his wild oats, would now become a steady character, particularly as they knew that he was possessed of naturally good talents, and, above all, of a most warm and affectionate heart.

Mr. Wilding had been about four months in London after his return from Wales, when one afternoon he made his appearance a few hours earlier than usual at Harley Street, and with a happy countenance informed his wife that he had at last completed a full and satisfactory arrangement of all his commercial affairs, and that he had that morning received a letter from Mr. Price, in which he informed him that Wildmount was now ready for their reception, having undergone, in the short space of time allowed them, many important improvements and alterations; it was therefore proposed that they should without loss of time take possession of the mansion, and a few days afterwards Mrs. Courtenay having called, Mrs. Wilding requested that she would allow Amelia to accompany them, and be their visitor during the autumn, to which a ready acquiescence was given. I, at their warm and urgent solicitations, joined them in a week or two with my girls and wife, and a happier party could scarcely have been imagined then we were, when assembled in this now truly splendid place. I could scarcely again have recognized it, so completely was it metamorphosed and beautified. The unique lodges were re-embellished, the lions restored to their original freshness, the splendid avenues cleared and opened up, and the little silvery stream which gurgled, with its falls and ornamental bridges, through the pleasure grounds, were again all made perfect and complete.

Miss Courtenay instead of stopping for the few autumnal weeks, had a *little* extended her visit, as I found her at Wildmount *in statu quo* the following year, when I again joined their party, and there she seemed disposed to remain, her father and mother having also in the interval spent several weeks with them.

CHAPTER V.—A HAPPY MEETING.

NONE of them had letters from Frederick Holt for two mails, at which they begun to feel very uneasy. Winter had approached, and they were all one evening engaged in their different amusements and occupations. Miss Courtenay had left her harp, where she had been charming all with several of her favourite songs, and was then engaged in a contest at chess with Mr. Wilding; little Henry was playing about the floor, whilst Mrs. Wilding had been amusing herself with the baby on her knee (which she had just given to her nurse), when the large door-bell was rung most furiously.

They all started to their feet. "Who can this possibly be?" said Mrs. Wilding. "I should not be at all surprised if it were our dear friend, Mr. G——; he promised to drop in upon us about this time some evening without notice. Dear me, girl!" she remarked to Miss Courtenay, "what is the matter? you have become quite pale, child!"

The door at this moment was thrown open, and the servant announced CAPTAIN HOLT, when in rushed Frederick. The lovers caught each other's eyes in a moment, and in the next they were locked in a fond embrace, which was likely to have been an affair of some continuance had Mr. Wilding not called them both to their senses.

"Come, come, Fred.!" he said, "this will never do; you must not overlook all your ancient friends. Don't you see your old-fashioned sister waiting anxiously for her share of all these fond caresses?"

The time was not long ere this request was complied with; and nothing was heard from him for fully ten minutes, but "My dear Mr. Wilding—My own dearest Amelia—My

beloved Lucy," &c., &c. "But, dearest Amelia," he said, "I had not the most distant idea that I should have been so blest as to have met you here. I knew that dear Lucy and you had become great friends; but I was not told, on calling at your father's and mother's residence in London, that I should have had this pleasure; they merely mentioned that you were on a visit to a friend in the country."

"No doubt, to take you unawares, and give you an agreeable surprise," said Mrs. Wilding.

"And they have been most successful," said Fred., clasping Amelia again to his bosom, who never thought that before he had ever looked half so handsome; the long residence in a tropical climate had considerably changed his complexion, which all thought was a great improvement. In reply to Mr. Wilding, he said he believed he still possessed such a useful appendage as a *liver*; indeed, he said he had enjoyed the most wonderful health in his absence, even amongst all his anxieties and miseries.

"When withdrawn from the vile gang," said he, "with which I had become entangled, I, for the first time, saw in their true colours all the thoughtless irregularities of which I had been guilty; and on the voyage, ere we reached Bombay, I had made considerable progress to reformation. Colonel Spencer, whom it seems you made acquainted with all the circumstances of my story, shewed me much kindness, and from the first took a great interest in me, and to enable him to invite me to his cabin and his table (from which I was debarred as a private trooper), he appointed me to the office of his secretary. Finding me possessed of *some* intelligence, I in a short time became necessary to him, both in the management of his private affairs and in those of the regiment. I one day frankly narrated to him all the circumstances of the short but wicked race I had run, of which he seemed previously to have been partially aware, and ever afterwards he watched me like a father, and would not allow me to associate with the men, although I was still obliged to wear the uniform of a common soldier. To Colonel Spencer I can never be too grateful, as, had I been allowed to mix generally with the regiment, I might have been again seduced by some of the most wicked of them. I have been more than usually fortunate, as, after having obtained my lieutenancy, we got into active service, and from our corps

being so dreadfully cut up, and the effects of the climate together, I have been promoted to the rank of captain ; and, however thoughtless my previous conduct, I hope you will find that, with a lively sense of the past, I shall now make every amends by the exemplary life I shall lead for the future, and endeavour to wash away all the unfavourable impressions that you have had so much cause to form of me, as but for the wise and determined course which you, my dear brother, adopted (I know with much anguish and distress) towards me, I might have been lost for ever."

"My dear boy," said Mr. Wilding, "the sight of you, under such happy circumstances, is a full and ample recompense to me for all the anxiety I have had about you ; but I must not take the merit of those harsh steps that were used for your reformation ; as to that we are indebted to our kind friend, Mr. G——, my co-trustee in your affairs, who firmly took your difficult case in hand. I argued with him that 'the most corrective punishment is kindness.'

"Not so," he replied ; 'give me the credit of some little experience—

"We must be cruel to be kind!"

particularly with such a spirit as this with which we have to deal.'

"It was he that laid the trap for your arrest as a deserter ; it was also he that communicated with the War Office concerning you, and who corresponded with Colonel Spencer, instructing him to watch over and provide you with whatever pecuniary assistance you might in reason require."

"For which," said Frederick, "Mr. G—— must ever command my eternal gratitude."

"Come, come, we will have no more of this talk to-night," said Mrs. Wilding impatiently ; "we are all too happy to see you ; the present moments are too precious to think of devoting more time to a retrospect of your past follies—they are gone, forgotten, and I am confident will never return. But stand up, like a good boy, and let Amelia and I feast our eyes with another look at you."

Fred., who was in the becoming undress of his regiment, with a hearty laugh good-humouredly complied with her request.

"Well," she said, "I think you will pass; you are certainly not fallen off in appearance. What think *you*, Amelia? Now, you may sit down again."

Amelia blushing replied—"That she certainly thought Mr. Holt was taller and stouter."

The evening passed over with the greatest happiness to all. Fred. called himself "the prodigal." His sister remarked, that he resembled more a messenger of exultation and joy; and Amelia, on being appealed to for her opinion, quietly remarked—"That his appearance had certainly been the means of diffusing a general pleasurable feeling amongst them all, to an extent that no other circumstance could have done."

Mr. Wilding now inquired of Fred. "if he had formed any plans for the future?"

"In that respect," he replied, "I have yet much to contend with. I find that I have seen quite enough to satisfy my desires of the world for a roving life, and have, as you know, dearly purchased sufficient practical knowledge to enable me to discriminate and draw the line betwixt the wolves and the lambs of our daily experience; and I imagine I may now be safely trusted to manage my own affairs. The fact is, I think of selling out of the army, removing from the turmoil and bustle of the world, and settling quietly and peaceably down as a country gentleman. The prospect of this happy consummation of all my enrapturing dreams for years, and the period of its being confirmed and established, must, however, solely depend upon one, without whom the whole world, with all its manifold blessings, would have no attractions to me."

A tender and most impressive glance from him to Amelia, left little doubt to whom this remark was intended to allude.

It was now past midnight, and their interchange of expressions of love and affection might have been protracted for hours longer, had not Mrs. Wilding suggested the propriety of their retiring to rest.

It was about the middle of October in this eventful year in the life of Mr. Wilding, when I found myself again a visitor at Wildmount; Mr. and Mrs. Courtenay had arrived two weeks before us, and Colonel Spencer had also been a partaker of their hospitality for some time. He was fond of the sports of the field—an amusement which Fred. and he

had ample means of gratifying themselves in, as both properties were well stocked with game.

A week or two had elapsed when Colonel Spencer's military duties required his presence at head-quarters. Before taking his departure, Mr. Wilding particularly requested a visit from him during the Christmas holidays, as they intended, he said, to have some gaieties going on in consequence of a very important event in the family that was fixed to take place about that time. To this invitation Colonel Spencer replied, that nothing would prevent his attending, if in health.

The sweet rural walks at Wildmount, and the opportunities afforded the young couple in exchanging their vows of affection, was the means of bringing matters more quickly to a bearing, and all the preliminary settlements and arrangements having been made, the marriage of Fred. and Amelia was fixed to take place in a few weeks.

It was now necessary that Mr. Wilding and I should relinquish our trust, to himself, of Frederick's affairs, when it was found that his fortune had very considerably accumulated in our hands, which enabled him to make arrangements of a much more liberal character than what he at one time anticipated for his future establishment. On this account it was a matter of discussion one evening, when our whole party was assembled, where the young couple should take up their residence; Mrs. Courtenay suggested that they should reside in London, but both Fred. and Amelia being fond of the country, it was fixed they should settle down in some quiet neighbourhood.

But *where?* was the question. I was as usual appealed to, and after some little thought I said—"I think I know of a spot which strikes me would in every respect be most eligible, possessing advantages of a nature which cannot fail to recommend it, and which I am sure will meet the approbation of all concerned."

"Well," said Mr. Wilding, "where *is* this most favoured place you so much extol?"

"Why, only about four miles from where we are seated," I replied, "and you have the disposal of it—what say you to 'Bellmount?' the house is in capital repair, and a very little expense and time will make it as delightful a residence as any in the county."

All seemed to be quite charmed with this proposal, particularly Mr. Wilding, and it was fixed that they should all visit "Bellmount" the following day, when they were so delighted with the beauty of the place, that it was there and then determined upon, and orders were immediately given to make the necessary preparations for the reception of the young couple.

Mr. and Mrs. Courtenay, with Amelia and Fred., in a short time left for London to prepare for the marriage, whither Mr. and Mrs. Wilding were to follow them, in time to be present at the ceremony.

The wedding was a gay affair, and all went off (which is not always usual in such cases) without any untoward event. After the marriage entertainment at Mr. Courtenay's, which was a very joyous one, Colonel Spencer and several of Fred.'s brother officers being present, the young couple drove off to spend their honeymoon at Wildmount, and at Christmas they were joined by the whole party, when the festivities were kept up without intermission until after the commencement of the new year, when Captain and Mrs. Frederick Holt took possession of Bellmount; and the former, having retired from the army, found his time sufficiently occupied, from the number of public offices he was selected to fill in the management of the business of the county, and in a very short time he became highly respected; hospitality, kindness of heart, and every feeling which characterises the English country gentleman, being stamped upon the tenure of his life.

Amelia, as might have been expected, has made a most devoted and excellent wife. She also is much esteemed in the neighbourhood, making it a duty to protect and watch over the comforts and wants of all those deserving and aged persons who had participated in the benevolence of the amiable Mr. Cavendish; and in addition to which (having excellent taste) she is making constant improvements in the pleasure-grounds around the mansion, which gives employment to many who otherwise would be destitute.

I have little more to add—I understand a day seldom passes without some intercourse taking place between the two families. Mrs. Wilding and Mrs. Holt are most loving and affectionate friends, each finding full employment in the management of their respective families and households, the

former being on the increase both at Wildmount and Bellmount.

Mr. Wilding still retains the same composure, amiability of character, equanimity of temper, and moral courage that has marked his whole life ; and he is now receiving the well-merited reward of his patient endurance under an accumulation of almost unparalleled trials, which to many would have appeared insurmountable, and beneath which hundreds would have sunk. He is a worthy representative of his long line of ancestors, and has now few ungratified wishes. His great ambition is at all times to make those around and dependent upon him happy ; the poor never want a friend when he is near, whilst he spends a busy, useful, and self-denying life, beloved and respected by all that know him.

The Highway Attack.

ABOUT three hundred yards from the south gates of my place is painted on a stone, in glaring crimson characters, on the wall, the startling word BLOOD, which I regret to see that some of my too officious friends freshens up every year, and which daily reminds me of an event which I would much rather erase from my memory.

Relentless time has rolled on ; still the number of years that have intervened in my checkered life since the disaster I am about to describe, have rather increased than effaced from my remembrance the impression of that awful night ; when the lives of myself and servant, but for the interposition of an ever-watchful Providence, would have been sacrificed by the hands of merciless assassins.

I had been for several weeks harassed by a strange, unusual, and unaccountable depression of my spirits, arising from no particular cause—an apprehension of something, I knew not what ; a foreboding of misery, and a dread of some impending evil which I could neither conquer, nor, with my boasted moral strength, argue myself out of. This feeling followed me to my pillow night after night, where I conjured up the wildest phantoms of misery that the imagination could conceive. My wife, who did not fail to remark the extraordinary change in my usual buoyant spirits, endeavoured all she could to turn my mind from the foolish notions and fears I had imbibed. But it was of no avail ; this extraordinary influence, which gained upon me daily, I could not resist.

In the spring of the year 180—, two persons made their appearance in the town of A—, and took up their abode at the “G— Arms,” the principal inn, immediately opposite the Bank office. The one was a stout, coarsish man, about forty years of age ; the other, a delicate and genteel-looking

youth, might be about twenty. They seemed to be very retired in their habits, evincing no desire to cultivate the acquaintance of any of those persons who frequented the house, the ostensible object of their visit to our quiet locality being the sport of fishing in the neighbouring streams, to which they every morning started unattended, after partaking of an early breakfast, returning in the evening. Frequent questions were asked by them of the old waiter as to the business of the Bank, my usual habits, &c., the replies to which always seemed to afford them much interest. However, after a sojourn of two or three weeks, they took their departure, and, as they had regularly paid their way, had given little trouble, and generally conducted themselves as gentlemen, no more at the time was thought of them, nor were any remarks made as to any peculiarity in their demeanour.

It was a lovely morning in the month of April in the same year. I had been confined to the office and the ungenial atmosphere of the Bank all the previous day, and, as I felt that I should be benefited by fresh air and exercise, instead of taking my carriage, as was my wont, I fancied riding into town on horseback, a distance of about four miles from my residence, with the intention of returning the same way after finishing my business in the evening. It was the day preceding a very extensive annual cattle fair at H——n, about fifteen miles distant, on the occasion of which our establishment always did much important business. I had had a bustling day of it—markets were good, and many lots of cattle and other agricultural property had exchanged hands during the morning, satisfactory both to buyer and seller.

About seven in the evening, I had locked up my papers and finished a hurried dinner, when Perkins, my servant, came to inform me that our horses were ready whenever I was; he lingered in the room for a few minutes, and at last observed—"I think, sir, as the night is dark, and the moon will not rise for an hour at least, it might perhaps be better that you took a post-chaise with the Bank parcel, and I will immediately follow with the horses."

However, I had made my arrangements; so told him to step across the way, and request the cashier to make up and bring me his parcels properly sealed, that they might be

taken home with me for the night. They were placed in Perkins's saddle-bags, and contained a large amount of gold, bank-notes, and other securities, intended to be taken with me to meet the demands of the bank on the following morning.

We were both mounted on spirited horses. I had so far jogged quietly along the road, with Perkins close behind me; had passed the boundary of my estate, and was within a quarter of a mile of my own gates, when the sound of horses' feet at full speed attracted my attention. I thought at first it might be some of the farmers returning home intoxicated from market, but I was soon undeceived, as two men well mounted were immediately upon us; when I heard Perkins exclaim—

“Keep off you villains, or I'll blow your brains out!” and, on turning round, saw him in a desperate and deadly struggle with one of the ruffians, who fired a pistol aimed at his head; but his horse at the instant plunged and reared, which prevented its taking effect, and doubtless saved his life. The other scoundrel by this time had made a dash at me.

I cried out “What do you want?”

“D—n you, your money or your life!”

I exclaimed, “Keep off at your peril, we are armed and resolute; in the mean time, Perkins, when he saw me attacked, had pulled a pistol from the holsters (which he always carried before him) and fired; the ball passed within an inch of the ruffian's head, who immediately fired at me with a more deadly precision, one slug having entered my cheek, shattering the bone, and another grazing the temple lodged behind the left ear. I was instantly knocked from my horse to the side of the road; both the villains were now upon Perkins; he had grappled with one of them, and had seized hold of the cape of his great-coat; the other coward, from behind struck him a dreadful blow with the loaded handle of his whip, which felled him to the ground, he, in falling, tearing the cape nearly off, and dragging the saddle-bags with him, and saving the property, upon which he fell on his knees on the road, and implored them to take the money but to save our lives—conceiving that they had doubtless secured their booty, they made off with his horse at full speed, when he ran in quest of, and calling loudly for assistance. Meantime, I lay weltering in my blood—the last thing I remember was

seeing my grey charger flying past me at full speed. I then felt as if sinking into as calm and sweet a sleep as the purest and most placid slumbers of an innocent babe; but oh! horror of horrors! what pen can describe or words express the agony and torture I endured on my return to sensibility—the reaction of the nerves, and the rush of the blood back to my heart? I felt as if a thousand rats were gnawing at my very vitals. I was in a frenzy of madness and despair, at the thought of being doomed to die on the highway, without even my servant to assist me. I appealed to heaven for mercy—implored that my life might be spared for the sake of my beloved family—for the sake of those in business; hundreds of whom depended upon me for assistance and support, and to whom my death would be total ruin. I thought over all my sins of commission and neglect, and felt that I had been unworthy to live, and was unprepared to die. I again sank into a tranquil insensibility, when I saw plainly developed and flit before me a sweet vision—the harbinger of hope, and fraught with peace, joy, and love: it was the spirit of my blessed Saviour.

On my return to consciousness, I found I had been conveyed by Perkins, with the assistance he had obtained, to one of my farm-houses. My bed was surrounded by one or two members of my family, with the surgeon from the town, a dissipated man who had been brought from a public-house. He had, although half drunk, extracted the ball, which was found lodged in the immediate region of the carotid artery. An express was despatched instantly to Edinburgh for the eminent Dr. B——ll, who had for years followed our peninsular army, and was famous for the cure of gunshot wounds. He was found attending an assembly; he lost not a moment, and was with me in the incredible space of eight hours (one hundred miles), without having changed his ball-dress. On examining my wounds, he held up his hands in astonishment, and inquired how and by whom the ball had been extracted; and, on being introduced to the surgeon, he seized him by the hand, and exclaimed—

“Sir, you are an honour to your profession; had I, with my great experience, put the finest cambric needle in the direction from which you have extracted this ball, I could not have been answerable for the consequences. Sir, you have saved Mr. G——’s life.”

In an incredible short space of time the rumour spread like wildfire, far and near, that Mr. G—— had been robbed and killed on the highway; the alarm-bell of the town was rung, and more than twenty sturdy horsemen started in pursuit of the miscreants, scouring the country in all directions; the sub-sheriff, with two active officers, followed, and traced the ruffians by moonlight (from one of their horses having cast a shoe) as far as the town of Penrith, when they lost all scent of them. Five hundred pounds was offered by the county, and five hundred pounds by my own family for their apprehension, but all was without avail, until an incident occurred after the lapse of four months (when I was just recovering from my wounds), which led to an immediate investigation. The landlord of the chief hotel at Carlisle, on the night of the attack, was requested by a young man who called and had some refreshment, to take charge and keep for him, until his return, any letters that might arrive by post addressed to "Dr. Peirce." One *did* arrive on the following morning, which, from its remaining so long unclaimed, and its otherwise suspicious appearance, was opened and read in presence of the public authorities; upon which Mr. Hornby, the sub-sheriff, and an active officer, immediately started for London with introductions to Sir Richard Birnie, the Bow Street magistrate. The letter ran thus—

"RISING SUN, B——H PLACE, HIGH STREET, MARYLEBONE,
15th April, 18—.

"*Crofts, beware!*—The hawks are abroad—the bloodhounds are on your track, I imagine, for that unfortunate affair at Hounslow; fly to the coast of Cumberland—'tis your only chance. You will find timber ships sailing weekly from thence to North America. I hope you have had more luck with the banking business. Have your eyes and ears open. Despatch the 'Bantam' instantly for town whenever the job is done; and direct to me, post-office, Kew, immediately on your reaching t'other side of the Atlantic—Yours in haste,

"S. BOULT."

Immediately on arriving in London, Mr. Hornby and the officer waited upon Sir Richard Birnie at Bow Street, and told him their errand, the details of which, he informed them, he

was already cognizant of; but, says he, I will call in one of my most efficient and active officers, to whom I intend to intrust this affair, and who had better be present at our interview; and on ringing a table-bell a policeman appeared. Tell Mr. Lavender I want to see him. The door in a few minutes opened, and the far-famed thief-taker entered. He was a tall, powerful, and handsome man, about thirty-five years of age, with a very ruddy complexion, indicative of generous, and perhaps of irregular, and occasional excessive, living; he had an extraordinary piercing eye, which was jet black, and his general expression was that of much shrewdness and determination of character, which could not be mistaken. He was dressed in a brown sort of square-cut jockey coat, with corduroy breeches and top boots—a “Belcher” neckcloth; he spoke in a gruff voice, he was laconic in conversation, and his manner easy but respectful.

Says Sir Richard—“Lavender, I want you to attend these gentlemen on the business of this daring highway attack upon Mr. G——, the Scotch banker.”

“Ay, ay, Sir Richard!” replied Lavender. “Now,” he observed, addressing Mr. Hornby, “what additional information can you give us?”

“This intercepted letter,” replied Mr. Hornby, which was read with much seeming interest by Sir Richard, and to which Lavender nodded, and winked a significant assent; “besides,” said Mr. Hornby, “this shoe found in the road, cast by the horse of one of the ruffians on the night of the attack, and also this handle of a whip, supposed to have been broken off by a blow inflicted on the head of Mr. G——’s servant; and it also may be useful to know,” continued Mr. Hornby, “that the cape of a light drab great-coat, worn by the youngest of the two men, was nearly severed from it in the scuffle.” To all which information Lavender chimed in with sundry meaning and occasional remarks, such as, “Good—important—unkimmin useful,” &c. &c.

“Well, now,” inquired Sir Richard of Lavender, “what course do you intend to adopt?”

“To visit the haunt of this gang,” he replied, “without loss of time.”

So, after settling several preliminaries, it was arranged that he should call upon Mr. Hornby at his hotel at ten o’clock that night. At the hour appointed to a minute, Lavender

made his appearance, but so completely disguised that Mr. Hornby never could have recognized him as the same person he had seen in the morning. He was now dressed as a coachman, being enveloped in an immense box-coat, his whiskers and eyebrows had increased much in size, he wore a broad-brimmed hat, his boots were bespattered with mud, and with whip in hand he appeared as having just come off a journey.

After the first surprise at this metamorphosis had subsided, Mr. Hornby inquired if he would partake of some refreshment before starting; he replied, with thanks, that he was not particular, and would just have a thimbleful of brandy and water. The waiter seemed to know his habits, for he brought him a tumbler half-filled with the alcohol, to which he added about a fourth part of water. He immediately tossed it off, and having then first well-tutored Mr. Hornby and the officer, as to silence in whatever they might see or hear, a coach was called, and off they started on their perilous mission. On arriving at the foot of Marylebone Lane, Lavender suggested that they should there leave the coach to wait until their return, and, to avoid suspicion, walk the rest of the distance. They had not proceeded more than a hundred yards when he came to a stand-still, and remarked—"This is the crib." It was certainly by no means an inviting hostel; the sign meant for the "Rising Sun" had more the appearance of a sun all but set in a dense November London fog. On entering a small dingy parlour, to which the landlord rather hesitatingly shewed them, they were introduced to as repulsive a looking crew as could well be imagined; there were about a dozen in the room, some drinking and smoking, others playing dominoes and dirty cards, about which endless disputes and much loud talking seemed to prevail. Lavender, with a confident air, boldly swaggered in amongst them.

"Good-evening, masters," he observed, as he helped himself to a pipe from the table, round which they were all assembled; "I hope we have not fallen foul of a private party?"

"Not at all," growled one of the men; "we shall be glad of your company," and, having ordered some brandy, they all sat down in friendly converse with the occupiers of one of the most infamous dens of highwaymen and thieves in London.

Lavender seemed quite familiar with their style of conversation ; and in a short time was in close familiar discourse with them on the subjects of the turf, the prize-ring, and other matters of sporting interest. It had now approached midnight, and they were despairing of making any progress in the object of their mission, when the door of the room opened suddenly, and a young man of genteel but delicate appearance entered ; he was booted and spurred, and wore a light drab great-coat, which had the appearance of having weathered many a storm.

"Ah ! my little Bantam," exclaimed one of the party, "we all thought you were lost."

Upon this, Lavender put his finger on his lips, and quick as lightning turned his piercing and intelligent eye on Mr. Hornby.

"Why," says the youth, "I have had rather toughish work of it to-night on Finchley Common ; it is plain I am out of luck at present—but, no matter, give me some 'swizzle !'"

After having satisfied his thirst, he turned to Lavender and his companions, and having scrutinized them well, in an audible whisper he inquired at one of the gang who they were, and who had introduced them ? The reply did not appear satisfactory, for, immediately addressing Mr. Hornby, he observed—

"We, gentlemen, have private business here, and are desirous of all strangers leaving the room when it suited their perfect convenience. In the mean time, he wished to be informed what they were 'going to stand !'"

Lavender, who saw this was the forerunner of a quarrel, which he rather courted, replied to this observation—

"We will remain or leave the room when it suits *our* convenience, not yours. My friend will 'stand' only what I choose to tell him ; and if you are not more civil, my tulip, I will teach you in a way I have of my own to be so."

Upon this all started to their feet, and a general row took place. Mr. Hornby and his assistant received several very heavy blows from the fists of those near them. Lavender had grappled with him they called the Bantam, whom he was about overpowering, when the latter aimed a blow at his head with the but-end of his whip, which he seized in his iron grasp, and noticing it to be deficient in the handle,

he as quick as lightning attached the broken portion he had previously got in his hand, which exactly fitted, and turning his eye upon him with the glance of a fiend, exclaimed, at the pitch of his voice—

“George Mansel, you are my prisoner!”

All was now confusion—cries resounded through the room of—“Pitch it into them! Down with the ——! Douce the glims!” &c., &c., &c.

The room was now in total darkness, Lavender in a stentorian voice cried out—

“Look to the door Mr. Hornby; allow no one to pass, and loudly called for assistance in the king’s name.”

A fearful struggle took place; chairs and tables were upset, and a desperate effort was made by the gang to gain the mastery, and effect their escape; but this was prevented by the appearance of a party of armed police who had been previously warned to be in readiness, if needed. When lights were again introduced, a tableau of a most extraordinary character presented itself. Lavender (having divested himself of his great box-coat) appeared in front, holding Mansel and another of the gang each by the collar, and in the short space of time allowed him had managed in the dark to handcuff the former. Mr. Hornby occupied one side of him, trembling like an aspen-leaf, and his officer, pale as death, stood at the other; whilst the background was filled by a group of miscreants who, from their excitement, appeared more like demons than human beings, and whose nightly atrocities (the terror of the suburban inhabitants) had for many months baffled the vigilance and the ingenuity of the police to prevent.

Lavender was now quite self-possessed and composed; he coolly picked out the men he “wanted” from this precious lot, directing them to be handcuffed, to which they all unresistingly submitted, and were marched off to the nearest lock-up; whilst Mr. Hornby and Lavender, with the addition of Mansel, returned to Bow Street in the coach that brought them.

On the following morning Mansel was brought before Sir Richard Birnie, who highly complimented Lavender for the dexterous manner in which he had managed this affair: and Mansel, after a short examination, was remanded for a week, to enable the necessary witnesses to be brought from the north.

When the news of all these proceedings reached me, I had a strange mixture of morbid curiosity, with an intense feeling of interest in, and even a sympathy and pity for, the man who, for the sake of gold would have ruthlessly deprived me of life, knowing that an ignominious death must inevitably be his portion. I therefore determined (having business anyhow in London) to accompany my servant, the doctor, &c., &c., who had been summoned to give their evidence.

Mansel was committed for immediate trial, at which I was present; and the evidence, both direct and circumstantial, was so conclusive that he was condemned to death, the judge holding out to him no hopes of the remission of his sentence from royal clemency. Mansel's youth, and interesting and delicate appearance, excited much sympathy in his favour on the occasion of his trial; and every exertion, with representations headed by myself, were made in the proper quarters, if possible, to save his life, but all proved without avail. 'Twas within a week of the day fixed for his execution, whilst sitting at breakfast in my hotel, that the following note was handed to me :—

"CONDEMNED CELL, NEWGATE, Monday, Midnight."

"Respected Sir—Were it possible for me to express to you the feelings of remorse and poignant grief which now rends my heart for the wickedness of my past life, and the injury I have inflicted upon you, I am sure that Christian pity alone would excite you to alleviate my sufferings. Will you allow me, therefore (ere I appear in judgment before my God), a brief interview, to enable me to acknowledge my guilt to you personally, and to entreat your pardon. I am, Sir—Your afflicted

"GEORGE MANSEL."

Immediately on receipt of this note, I ordered a coach and proceeded to Newgate, where I was met by the worthy chaplain of the prison, who informed me that poor Mansel had been most anxious to see me during the night, and that his mind was now in a blessed state; he told me he was sinking in health, and doubted whether he would live to require the services of the executioner. When I entered his cell he held out his hand, and gave me a look of gratitude

almost benign—he poured upon my head blessings and thanks for my visit, and opened his mind freely to me. I offered all the consolation in my power, and in the course of our conversation obtained from him a short outline of his wretched career; he told me he had not attained his twenty-first year—had been articled to an attorney—had broken his indenture, and, from one step of dissipation to another, he at last came to associate with the vilest of the vile, until want of means to gratify his course of wickedness, drove him one night to attempt highway robbery, to which he was urged by that arch villain Crofts, who had since made him his tool, and who was his accomplice in planning and carrying out the outrage for which he was about to suffer. During this recital he cried most bitterly; he told me he had some years previously changed his name, for which he seemed thankful, as on that account his connections would not be disgraced by his ignominious end. His father, a respectable farmer in Y—shire, he informed me, was alive, and was a good and pious man; he also had two sisters alive, of whom he spoke with the greatest love and affection. This he told me all calmly; but when I mentioned the name of his mother, his whole soul was roused in excitement, he breathed loudly and quickly, and looked as if convulsed. A flood of tears came to his relief, but his countenance had assumed a wild and bewildered expression; he seemed labouring to overcome some very strong emotion, which he evidently tried to resist, but could not subdue, and, ere we could aid him, fell with his face on the ground. On raising him up with the assistance of the warder, and on the surgeon of the prison being called, he informed me that he had ruptured an internal bloodvessel in the immediate region of the heart; he was laid upon his wretched pallet, and restoratives administered in the endeavour to extend for a few additional hours a life that could not be desired by its possessor or his fellow-creatures. I was overpowered with the scene, and had nearly fainted when the doctor entreated me to withdraw. Before doing so, however, I seized this poor broken reed by the hand, promising again to see him on the morrow, but that morrow to him never came; when I called again, the good chaplain told me all was over—he was DEAD! He had breathed his last in penitence and prayer, without a struggle, two hours after I had parted with him. I pray that never

more I may be led to witness such another scene, or my strength of mind be so severely tested.

I lately learned that the villain Crofts, who reached Canada in safety, did not, however, long escape the law ; he was apprehended on a charge of robbery and murder, and executed at Toronto about twelve months after the death of his poor victim, Mansel.

The Run on the Bank.

ABOUT the time of Bonaparte's threatened invasion, when the flotilla with his immense armament was expected every night to sail from the French coast to our peaceful shores, and to land (it was expected some way) near Sandwich or Pevensey ; and when cairns were erected on every mountain-top, and bonfires ready to be ignited, to arouse the whole country to arms the moment the alarm of his approach was given ; and when every lad who could carry a musket, carbine, or sword was armed, and prepared to give him a warm reception—we in this county could boast of as zealous, efficient, and gallant a regiment of volunteers as existed in the kingdom ; and, with perhaps some very few exceptions, would to a man (if necessity had required it) have come forward, heart and hand, in the service of the king, and in the cause of the defence of our favoured land and precious liberty.

These were tumultuous, but lively and cheering times. The news received every morning from the seat of war kept us in a constant state of excitement and loyal enthusiasm, and roused to action the ardour and energies of the previously most cold, indifferent, and inanimate.

The company raised in our town was perhaps as perfect and well-appointed as any in the regiment. Our rather eccentric townsman, Dr. Sutton, was selected to be the captain commandant ; and, passing over his little inoffensive infirmities of personal vanity and ostentatious display, a better choice could scarcely have been made. He was a bachelor, reputed rich, and a most loyal subject.

Jenny, his old housekeeper's control over him, it was whispered, was (though prudently exercised) authoritative and powerful ; and it was openly alleged that, from her influence with the doctor, she exercised corrupt practices in dispensing the patronage of his company, in proportion fully

as great as Mrs. Mary Anne Clarke could possibly have been guilty of with the Duke of York as commander-in-chief. She, with Morrison, the doctor's coachman, &c., composed the establishment, and the latter he appointed his chief non-commissioned officer.

No one knew his master's weak points better than Morrison, and none knew better how and when to humour and apply *that* flattery to him which often did not require much qualification.

Great were the preparations, and grand was the display, on the occasion of the field-day, on the review of the whole regiment; at an early hour in the morning, bells were ringing, drums beating, horses prancing, colours flying, &c., &c. When Captain Sutton appeared in his gorgeous uniform, covered *cap-à-pie* with every military ornament and appendage that could be imagined, with his profusely powdered head, capacious and well-trimmed queue, he was regarded by all as the personification of dignity and military grandeur; and the public admiration was transferred from him *only* when the old general scampered into the field surrounded by his staff, and was received with a universal burst of exultation.

Nothing could exceed the *éclat* with which the review, on the occasion I allude to, went off; and excepting a few casualties, which at the time rather disturbed the dignity and equanimity of the doctor, such as lance-corporal M'Curdy (a tailor by trade), having had his cap knocked off by a piece of wadding in the sham fight, throwing down his musket, taking to his heels for home, and never daring to look behind him, but persisting to all he met that they were firing bullets! Young Ensign Cox making a complaint, with tears in his eyes, to the captain, that Lieutenant Hood had mischievously and wilfully tore his ruffles; and private Hagg, the cheesemonger, requesting leave of absence at the most critical moment of the inspection, saying that he felt disabled for active service on account of the pain he was suffering from chilblains;—all those annoyances, however, were obliterated by the most flattering compliments made by the general to the commanding-officer, of the meritorious, efficient, and soldierlike manner in which the regiment had performed its several evolutions and manœuvres.

In the evening of the review, after mess, Captain Sutton had brought a few select friends with him to supper, to dis-

cuss the important proceedings of the day; on this occasion I was one of the favoured few. Shortly after supper, in a dignified and commanding tone of voice, he desired that Sergeant Morrison might be sent in with his report, and to receive his regimental orders for the evening.

"Well, Morrison," said the doctor when he entered, throwing himself back in his chair with great pomp, "how did *I* look to-day, as *I* marched past the general in column, in front of *my* company?"

"Look, Captain!" said Morrison; "you looked like Julius Cæsar at the head of the Roman army."

"Jenny, give the bones of the cold goose, and a bottle of porter, to Morrison."

Amidst all this turmoil the trade of the United Kingdom, from our command of the sea, and the adventurous spirit of our merchants, was in as flourishing a state as it had been known for years; the war prices were sustained, and not only colonial produce (of which we had the command) but every article of home consumption, was in the greatest request, and proved the means of enriching thousands.

The business of banking increased in the same ratio, and, as far as our establishment was concerned, we had secured almost a monopoly of the trade in those localities where our business was principally conducted. This excited the jealousy of a large, chartered Royal National Banking (Joint-Stock) Company, who left no stone unturned to annoy us.

I had for several weeks noticed that our notes, when put in circulation, seldom or ever came back to us, and for some time concluded that they had got across the border (where they had been always freely taken) with our cattle-dealers, and they might not in that case appear again for a week or two. When, however, we became really inconvenienced from the want of our usual circulating medium, particularly the one-pound notes, so as to compel us to make our payments with the paper of the joint-stock concern, I became annoyed, and apprehensive that something was wrong.

One evening, when I arrived at my hotel to superintend the business of the following morning, which was to be a very important market, I found my clerk waiting as usual with my letters, one of which riveted my attention and excited my alarm. It ran thus—

"A thunderbolt is about to fall upon you! Let not a moment be lost, after receipt of this note, in preparing to ward off a blow, the consequences of which (should you be taken by surprise) may lead to much inconvenience, discredit, disaster, if not total annihilation to your bank.

"This is no idle trifling with your judgment, but the disinterested caution of a

"FRIEND."

Although the handwriting of this note was disguised, still I could discover that it was from the pen of one of my old clerks, for whom I had obtained a more lucrative situation than the one he held in my office, in the bank I have named. As it may be imagined, I lost little time in making my arrangements under such an unexpected emergency. I immediately despatched two clerks to each of our other establishments, with express instructions to bring back with them all the gold and miscellaneous cash that could be spared. I had fortunately brought a large sum with me; but I knew that all, when put together, would fall far short of what would be required to meet the storm. I, therefore, ordered four post-horses to my carriage, and started to consult my partner Sir Walter.

When I reached the castle, I found him engaged entertaining some friends, who soon took their departure when they learned that mine was an important business visit.

When we were left alone, and the door was closed, Sir Walter commenced by saying—

"Now, G——, in the name of all that is sacred, what *has* happened? You appear jaded and wobegone; take a bumper of this claret, and then, pray, enlighten me as to this dire calamity, which seems so much to oppress you. Is all well with your family?"

"Yes," I replied, "thank God!"

He then asked me if the bank had been plundered.

"Not that I am aware of," I said.

"Then, has H—— & Co.'s house stopped payment?"

"On the contrary, we have a large remittance from them this morning," I replied.

"Then, what *is* the matter? Out with it, man."

I accordingly told him all about our missing notes, and handed him for perusal the anonymous letter I had received;

which, on having read, he sprung to his feet, snapped his fingers over his head, indulged in a most protracted whistle, danced a few steps of "Jack in the Green," and, when all these performances were finished, exclaimed with a loud laugh—

"Is that it all? How much will you require to stop the mouths of these cormorants?"

I replied—"As no doubt their proceedings will be followed by a run on the bank, I shall require at the least from forty to fifty thousand pounds."

After cogitating for a few minutes, he said—

"Well—I can manage that at present without much trouble or inconvenience; it fortunately so happens, that I have been lately investing extensively in Government securities."

And, after having devoted some time in making our calculations, and consulting as to our mode of procedure for the following day, I obtained from him ten thousand pounds more than I said I should require in exchequer bills and other Government scrip.

After our business was so satisfactorily concluded, and certainly a heavy burden taken from my mind, as it was now late I began to feel that I required some refreshment, having had little since morning; so, with Sir Walter's fine old claret and a hearty meal, I was again ready for the road, and, having got fresh horses, started long after midnight for town, a distance of sixteen miles, and reached my quarters about four o'clock in the morning.

I was in the bank at my usual hour, and was kept very busy during the whole day. I instructed our cashiers to retain and collect all the notes of the Royal — Bank that they could possibly manage, in which they were pretty successful.

We were just about closing our business for the day, when a post-chaise with four reeking horses drove at full speed down the main street and drew up at the bank door. I immediately concluded that these were *our customers*, and was not mistaken; as three persons, who proved to be Mr. Bennett their solicitor, their cashier, and bank porter, stepped out of the carriage and brought with them several large sacks—this display, I imagined, they flattered themselves, would disturb my equanimity; but on being shewn into

my private room, where I was engaged with my correspondence, I very coolly asked them to be seated, and having at my leisure finished the letter I was writing, I said—"Now, gentlemen, pray be so good as to inform me what is your business."

Mr. Bennett, the solicitor, having been deputed to be the spokesman, and after having evinced some little embarrassment, proceeded to say that they had a very unpleasant duty to perform; but the object of their journey was to obtain an exchange from us in gold, or other satisfactory securities, the sum of sixty thousand pounds of our notes, bills, and acceptances which they had brought with them.

I replied that, so far from its being unpleasant, it was rather a matter for congratulation for us to receive back our notes, as the want of them had caused us the greatest possible inconvenience.

"We are quite ready," I said, "to pay you the amount *now*—pray, how will you have it?"

This question seemed to take them aback; and, after consulting with each other for some time; their solicitor replied—

"You know, Mr. G——, as well as we do, what are legal tenders and what are not. We therefore hope that you will not unnecessarily occupy our time."

"Most assuredly not," I replied; "your time cannot possibly be more valuable than mine is to-day:" at the same moment took from the safe and tabled the following securities, viz.,

Their own notes.....	£17,000
Gold (4000 guineas)	4,200
Bank of England notes	5,000
Scrip $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent., Consols	21,800
Exchequer bills.....	10,800

£58,800

Our cashier having summed up these different amounts, and on receiving an affirmative in reply to my question as to whether or not these bonds, scrip, &c., before them were satisfactory, I said, "Now, gentlemen, it remains with you to hand over those claims that you say *you* have against us."

"Certainly," was the response, and the porter with his assistants forthwith appeared with their ponderous burdens.

I then observed that it would occupy my clerks a considerable time to count out all this cash, but that I must endeavour to make it as easy for them as possible by each taking it in turns, and, as I could not spare them during the day, it must be accomplished in the evenings after business hours.

"But, Mr. G——," they observed, "*our* time will not admit of *any* delay. We have to return, and make our report at the meeting of our directors, to-morrow."

"I am sorry for that, gentlemen."

"Will you not take our word for the amount?" said Mr. Bennett.

"Most certainly not!" I replied.

"You don't mean to say," said Mr. Bennett, "that we must submit to the ordeal of seeing nearly fifty thousand pounds in one-pound notes counted out? why, it would take a week to do so."

"Can't help that, gentlemen," I replied; "we are not in the habit of receiving money without being satisfied that it is correct. There are, you perceive, seventeen thousand pounds of your own notes which we have got to pay you. I will not be so irregular as to request *you* to accept of this sum on my *ipse dixit*; besides, on looking into your list, I observe several past due bills. You will require to satisfy us that the proper steps have been taken so as to secure our recourse on these documents; and, until these matters are satisfactorily settled, I shall lodge all the bonds, &c., that I have to give you in trust, with our chief crown legal officer in the town, to be handed to you when those necessary matters are arranged betwixt us with *his* entire approval."

"In that case," said Mr. Bennett, "since you decline or delay an immediate settlement on the terms we propose, we have no alternative but to protest your notes and bills."

"Such a proceeding," I replied, "gentlemen, would carry absurdity in the face of it; and *you*, Mr. Bennett, know better than I do, that it *could not* be done. Besides, if such an attempt were made, it would be at your peril, and involve the possible ruin of your establishment, powerful though it be. What! protest a bill, with cash before you to pay it in the regular way! (pointing to the table.) Besides," I continued, smiling, "you would find it no sinecure, for a week at least, to protest fifty thousand pounds worth of bills, mostly in one-pound notes, many of which are of different

domiciles, tenor, and dates. I think you will find my indispensable, regular, and reasonable request to count the notes, much more easily accomplished, and with less trouble, expense, risk, and loss of time, than putting such an absurd threat in execution as you have named."

My remarks were all so fair, reasonable, just, and business-like, that they were found by them, on a few minutes' consideration, irresistible, and could not possibly be overturned or objected to. Mr. Bennett consequently at last admitted candidly that they had no alternative but to submit, and a room was accordingly selected at the top of the house, where they were reluctantly compelled to commence this most tedious and irksome task, assisted by two of our clerks, who had previously been instructed not to hurry the operation, but, on the contrary, to be most particular in their accuracy. In the mean time, the local agent of the Royal — Bank, had been most industrious in circulating the report that such an extensive demand had been made upon us, which it would be impossible for us to meet; consequently, on the following morning, on my servant coming to my room, he informed me that the bank-doors had been besieged from an early hour, and that many persons from a considerable distance in the country were amongst the crowd. I therefore got to the office as quickly as possible, and, like a good general, made timely preparations for the attack.

Having supplied the tellers with the needful, I instructed them particularly in the duties they would have to perform, and impressed upon them the absolute necessity for their keeping collected and cool.

It was within half an hour of our usual time of commencing business, when the crowd outside became clamorous for admittance. I instructed the porters on no account to withdraw the bolts of the door a moment sooner than usual. The noise continued to increase; half the population of the town seemed to have been attracted to the spot. At last the knocking, shouting, and tumult, became so terrific, that I began to be apprehensive for our personal safety. The panic was at its height, and I therefore considered it prudent to request by note the chief magistrate to send us several constables for our protection. When this was done, and the hour usual for our beginning business arrived, I ordered the doors to be thrown open; but the first bolt had scarcely

been withdrawn, when the multitude made one general and violent bound forward, tore the doors from their hinges, and helter-skelter rushed to the counter, trampling females under foot, rending garments, and the stronger maiming the weaker, to such an extent that the shouting and screams became truly frightful.

When the uproar had reached its height, I made every endeavour to appease the throng, and to convince them of their causeless fright; but this, for a time, was entirely without effect, until at last in stentorian voice I called out that every creditor of the bank would immediately be paid IN FULL; but that, until order was established and peace restored, not a penny should cross the counter; and that, after this warning, those who appeared most active in the riot should be immediately given into custody. This had the desired effect, when the cashiers proceeded with calmness and precision in their vocations.

After a storm comes a calm. By midday all was peace and tranquillity; and before the evening arrived, many who had discovered their error, and regretted their precipitancy, returned to the bank with the sums they had so unadvisedly withdrawn in the morning.

Let us now return to our friends whom we left in the attic, engaged in their weary and enervating employment. It was about midnight when I visited them—they were all in a pitiable plight. Mr. Bennett remarked that he believed his fingers would never again relax, or be fit to wield a pen; Mr. Wyllie, the cashier, maintained that there was not a vestige of saliva left in his body; and the porter in attendance appeared far gone in intoxication.

As they had not got nearly half through their task, they again pleaded hard to be relieved. I therefore agreed to forego the remainder of the duty they had imposed upon themselves, on condition that they found us satisfactory security that the balance was correct, and that Mr. Bennett would accept a summons from our solicitor, on behalf of the bank, in an action for a conspiracy and slander, and a claim of £100,000 for damages, in reparation for the injury our credit, &c., had thereby sustained. "This," I said, "was my ultimatum;" and, after some hesitation, it was agreed to, and the following morning the negotiation was concluded.

The report of the plot formed for our destruction, and the

vindictive feeling displayed in the transaction to our establishment, which had been for years literally the support of the district, excited great sympathy for us throughout the country ; and, so far from injuring us, it had the effect of settling more firmly that credit which we had always sustained.

Our opponents could not possibly allow such a shameful case to come before a jury ; so, after much negotiation, we agreed to a compromise, the result of which left us little cause for dissatisfaction, or ever to regret the RUN ON THE BANK.

The Old Man's Stratagem.

CHAPTER I.—THE SETTLEMENT.

NOTHING can be more disgustful and repulsive to a well-ordered mind, than to witness a want of respect and reverence, or call it that tender affection, which is dictated by nature and duty from children to parents. The laws of the land, to a certain extent, enforce this virtue, by compelling the child, according to his circumstances, to support the parent when age and infirmity incapacitate him from being able to do so for himself. But they cannot extend their jurisdiction beyond this limit, nor have they the power of imparting that heavenly attribute, possessed by all good men—parental reverence and veneration—or change the natures of those who are wicked enough to disregard this sacred duty. Neglect, cruelty, and undutiful conduct to parents, as with common ingratitude, is a crime of such a heinous character, that no one was ever known to confess himself guilty of it, and it is often the case that punishment follows it even in this world.

Shakspeare, in his beautiful play of "King Lear," brings before us a powerful instance of parental neglect, abandonment, and foul ingratitude: and what I am about to relate as having occurred in real life, somewhat resembles that forcible and affecting story.

Edward Lawson, Esq., of The Braes, commonly called Laird Lawson, was a man of the most amiable and affectionate disposition; he inherited an estate from his father, the rental of which was about £800 per annum, which had been in his family from time immemorial, and in consequence of a long minority, his trustees had saved for him a considerable amount of cash, which was deposited with us at accumulat-

ing interest, so that when he attained majority he possessed a handsome fortune, independent of his landed property. Many of his young neighbours endeavoured to entice him to join them in their amusements of the field, race-course, &c., but he was proof against their allurements, his mind had taken an entirely different turn : if he was lavish in his expenditure, it was only displayed when claims were made upon his charity, in which he always showed much liberality, and in the dispensing of which he almost invariably consulted me, as his extreme generosity too often led him to cross the bounds of prudence. This I have found no uncommon case; for a mind governed by feelings of philanthropy, unless there be some safety-valve to relieve its pressure, and prevent its often indiscriminate and misapplied indulgence, would find it difficult to struggle with the tests and trials to which it would be subjected in passing through the furnace of the business of life. And although, after the lapse of years, the heart may become seared and case-hardened by the experience obtained in having been brought in close contact with a wicked world, still, even then, it will not be found proof against a legitimate appeal, as when a pure and undisguised case of real distress presents itself, it is then that nature prevails, and all the finer feelings of charity, generosity, and tenderness, sparkle out in the character of the true philanthropist.

Mr. Lawson was also a great book collector, and in consequence possessed one of the most extensive and best-selected libraries in the county; and his passion for acquiring literary knowledge was such, that, give him his books, he felt independent of the bustling world around him.

Excepting at church, and occasionally at market, he was seldom seen, and was looked upon almost as a recluse; indeed, he never had had much taste for mixing in promiscuous society since he left a large public school, where he had had abundant experience of the world in miniature, and to which he had been sent very young. *There*, as a mild and unassuming boy from the country, he had witnessed an amount of little iniquities (against which his high principle protected him) surpassing belief. The gross and unblushing immorality, the despotic attempts to tyrannize, the petty vices and mean evasions, daring outbreaks, and the sufferings wantonly inflicted by the cowardly stronger upon the weaker,

were quite sufficient to disgust a far less sensitive heart with his fellow-creatures than that of Edward Lawson. He therefore lived very retired, and shewed no disposition to associate with any of the neighbouring gentry, and by many was called peculiar and eccentric.

His household was composed of a superintending female (Mrs. Glen), who had been long in the family, and two others—a maid and a man-servant. The first-named was the ruling spirit of the establishment; her dominion, however, like all other earthly governments, be they ever so powerful, must have an end.

When the laird had attained the age of about forty, he was most dexterously entrapped and inveigled into a marriage with a buxom young widow, the daughter of a neighbouring farmer, who had six altogether to pick and choose from, and who were all large masculine women.

Mrs. Lawson, when she took possession of The Braes, brought with her two of her sisters as companions, and—to amuse the laird! But he, being rather a diminutive man, did not appear to advantage when surrounded by this troop of Amazons when they were all assembled at The Braes, which, to the laird's discomfort, was too often the case, and to the annoyance of Mrs. Glen, from whose hands the sceptre of government had been most ruthlessly wrested on the accession of Mrs. Lawson; but she consoled herself in the belief that "it is a long lane that has not a turning," and lived in the hope that the time *might* soon come when she would again be restored to power.

The laird did not long enjoy the delights of matrimony. He found his little comforts sadly encroached upon—reading was out of the question, as his ears were constantly dinned with the jingling of an old pianoforte, and his neat little library, with its Turkey carpet and his books, which he had arranged with such precision that he could place his hand on any one of them in the dark, was reduced to anarchy and confusion; besides, Mrs. Lawson took every opportunity of amusing him with a detail of the affection, benevolence, and acquirements of her former husband. (An old proverb says—"Never marry a widow unless her last husband was hanged.") The laird, besides, on receiving the congratulations of his friends, imagined that they were given in a strain of wagery that savoured of ridicule, to his no small chagrin.

Of all actions of a man's life his marriage least concerns other people, yet of all actions it is most meddled with by other people. Many, like the poor laird, have been similarly entrapped. "Against our better knowledge let us not be convinced, or fondly overcome with female charms ;" but don't let my young friends be discouraged, as I am convinced that no *real* happiness in life *can* be found excepting in the marriage state. This I affirm in the face of the remark made by an old fustly lying bachelor, who maintained "that there are few wives so perfect as not to give their husbands reason *once* a day to repent of marriage, or at least to envy for a time the unmarried."

The laird, however, bore all the inconveniences and privations to which he had been subjected, from the change of circumstances brought about by his marriage, with the patience of a Stoic, the more particularly from its having been communicated to him that he must shortly expect to become a father ; so, in fine weather, he made his study the plantations and walks about the place.

In a short time Mrs. Lawson presented him with a fine girl, and paid him a similar compliment in the two succeeding years. Mrs. Glen now became very useful, having been, during a considerable period of her life, accustomed to a nursery. Mrs. Lawson, however, never recovered after the birth of her last child ; she died within twelve months of this event, leaving the laird *in statu quo* as he had been before his marriage, excepting with the additional appendages of his three little girls. Mrs. Glen again resumed the reins of government, and things went on smoothly for many years, until the period arrived when it was necessary that the education of the girls should be thought of. A governess was accordingly provided for them, and, after they had been under her charge for a year or two, they were sent to a first-class school in the metropolis, with the request that no expense should be spared in their instruction. They, therefore, became (being all three talented) soon highly accomplished ; and, when they returned to The Braes, they were much admired, and their society courted, not only on account of their mental qualifications, but from the improvement that had taken place in the habits of Mr. Lawson, whose hospitality had now become proverbial, as the whole thought and business of his life seemed to be what he could do to contri-

bute most to the happiness of his daughters, to whom he was ardently attached. He indulged them in every way. They never expressed a wish within his means that was not gratified, and his very nature and habits seemed, on their account, to have undergone a complete change, that he might humour them in all their fancies, and accompany them in their visitings; and he went even so far as to attend them one night to an election ball, to which they had been invited—a scene totally at variance with all his former notions and tendencies.

Although superior in personal appearance to her, Margaret and Ann, the two eldest girls, resembled their mother in manners and disposition, and associated much with their aunts, who all remained unmarried; whilst Grace, the youngest, was very like her father (to whom she clung with sincere affection) in generosity, amiability, and tender gentleness, her greatest pleasure being when she was allowed quietly, and without show or remark, to contribute to all those little comforts and attentions, trifling in themselves, but which tend to soften the feelings, and relieve the indications of physical decay, consequent on the palpable approach of old age.

Margaret and Ann, on the other hand, made a great display in the performance of any necessary or indispensable duty to their father, so that little Grace was generally kept in the background; her attentions unappreciated, and getting but scanty credit from all parties for her purity of mind, and her sincere and benevolent heart. Indeed, a jealousy existed on the part of her sisters, that they went so far as to ascribe to her every thing that was artful and cunning, and, this being constantly dinned in the old man's ears, he in time imbibed the impression, that to a certain extent it must be so; but although Grace saw this growing feeling, with much pain, plain enough, it did not in the least degree lessen, or in any way vary, the performances of what she knew to be her sacred duty.

The good, benevolent laird was now becoming older and older, and his books, and little improvements about the doors and garden, ceased to afford him that amusement which they used to do.

One day he called the three girls into his little library, and addressed them thus—

"My bairns," he said, "I have been lately thinking, as I am now stricken in years, and as my greatest wish and comfort is your happiness, to divide among you all the worldly gear that I possess, so that I may see you enjoy it whilst I am in life; and I am sure, when I do so, I shall never be in a strait, as long as you have it, for the want of a bite and a sup."

"Oh, father!" said Margaret, "this is so very, very kind of you, and I never could have dreamt that you would have done so much for us. I expected, when the time came when it should please God to take you to himself, that we should each perhaps have shared in what you left behind you, but I little imagined that you would have thought of us in this way during your lifetime; but you know full well how much I love you, dear father, and that you are first in my thoughts above all the world besides, and my only regret is, that I cannot do more for you than I do."

"I am sure of that," replied the laird; "and I have not a doubt that you will all be the same to me under all circumstances."

"Indeed," said Ann, "it would be ill *our parts*, after all the kindness we have received from you, dear father; but you could not have paid us a higher compliment than the confidence you are about to place in us. I am only vexed that we are not doing to you what you are doing to us, and then you would have seen where the sincere love for you most lies. I shall tenaciously save my proportion, whatever it may be, in applying it to all your little wants and necessities, and shall make it the business of my life constantly to watch night and day, when you may require my assistance."

"Were I not sure," said the laird, "that you are all to me that a fond father could wish, I would not be speaking to you as I am now doing, nor would I be parting with my all in this manner amongst you; it is the best and only proof I have it in my power to give, of the notion I have formed of your affection and unalterable attachment. But what says my little Grace to all this—she does not seem to join with her sisters in approving of my proposed arrangement?"

"Indeed, I don't, dear father!" said Grace, bursting into tears. "I for one will never consent that you should yield up your all, and be a dependant even on your own children, much as you may love them and they you. There are so

many marvellous events constantly taking place in the world, that often the very natures of people undergo a total change, from circumstances which we neither could have foreseen, or imagined possible to happen. No one can feel more gratitude, dear father, than I do for your great kindness and affection ; but the sacrifice of your all to us I will never agree to."

"There, now," said Ann, "that's always her way. There's never any thing sensible proposed in the house that she does not throw cold water upon it—for shame, to contradict your dear father when he is making such a very kind offer to us ; it is, to say the least of it, but a poor compliment for you to pay to him, and certainly no proof of that true affection you boast of having for him. Never mind her, dear father—if we were to follow her counsel at all times in this house, we should have but indifferent management and little comfort."

"I cannot but say," returned the laird, "but that I have noticed a great change lately in you, Grace, and your sisters have seen it as well as myself ; you are the only one of my family that does not seem to appreciate and evince any gratitude for my good intentions, and your conduct appears to me to have been, for some time past, far on the north side of kindly to your father."

Upon hearing these remarks—the first of the sort she had ever received from her father—she made no response ; but poor Grace left the room, weeping bitterly.

It must have been on the following day after this conversation with his daughters, that Laird Lawson called upon me at the bank. I saw at once that he had something very important to communicate, and he was not long in making known to me what his intentions were. I asked him if he had thought well over it before taking such a very extraordinary step ; he told me he had, and all his daughters had agreed to it excepting Grace, his youngest, who, he feared, had differed from them all more from the spirit of contradiction and temper than principle ; and for that reason he meant only to settle one-fifth of his property upon her, whilst the others should have at least two-fifths.

I remarked that this was cruel and unfair ; that I was much of Grace's opinion, and attempted to reason with him, but it was in vain. He was in this, as in every thing else that he fancied in the arrangement of his own affairs, contumacious and stubborn. I told him that I observed there was a large

amount to the credit of his account in the bank, and requested to know how he wished this sum to be disposed of. He replied that it was his intention to divide it amongst the young ladies in proportions as proposed. I suggested that it might be better to apply this sum in laying out the plantations, improving the land, and working a copper-mine on the estate, in which a rich lode had lately been discovered; and from which, if judiciously managed, his daughters would receive the greatest benefit eventually. This he agreed to, and, after much to do, I got him to consent to retain the use of the mansion-house for himself during his lifetime, with seventy pounds a-year, which he said would serve him for pocket-money, as there would be little chance of his ever requiring money for his own support as long as his daughters were alive. The deed of settlement was accordingly drawn out by our solicitor, in conformity with his own instructions, with a few additional private hints from myself, whom, with Dr. Moore, our worthy clergyman, he nominated as trustees, and the deed was regularly executed accordingly.

When the aunts heard of this change of affairs at The Braes, they were not long in promulgating the fact far and near, and the amount of the fortunes of the young ladies were, in a short time, by report doubled, and in some cases quadrupled; the consequence was, that numerous suitors were not long in paying their devoirs to them.

The first that made her appearance at the altar was Ann, who married a Mr. Robert Evans, an extensive timber-merchant. He was a man supposed to be well to do in the world; but when he came to me to obtain my consent to settle Miss Ann's annuity upon himself, it did not diminish the rather unfavourable opinion with which I had always regarded him in our business relations. I firmly and emphatically declined acceding to his request, and he left me evidently much chagrined.

Evans was a man not generally liked; he was mean, coarse, and rude in manners, and, whilst he cringed with vile and low servility to his superiors, he practised the greatest extortion on the poor tradesman who was so unfortunate as to come within his power. (Let those who, ignoble by nature, have nevertheless put on the lion's hide, "doff it for shame, and hang a calf-skin on those recreant limbs.")

He was totally devoid of that which regulates the heart,

which is the basis of every honest tendency, and without which no man can enjoy real happiness—he had *no* religious feeling; on the contrary, scoffed at it and its ordinances. The character that Burke gave of the too eager, reckless, and ambitious merchant, might be well applied to him—"He had no faith but in his banker—his ledger was his Bible—the Exchange was his church—the desk his altar, and money his god." Youth has much to learn of the tactics used in the battle of life. The general scramble for the yellow dust frequently changes the very natures of men, and in no country more so than our own. The almost common character of the English ('tis a sorry saying, but too true) is pride, and the meanest of all pride—purse-pride. Even a poor lord is despised—a man is esteemed not by his merit, but by his possessions. There goes a good man who has not a vice, he would scarcely be noticed; but exclaim, that that man is worth five hundred thousand pounds, and he will be stared at until he is out of sight. Evans, therefore, being reputed rich, had many fawning adherents, and from being enabled to give good dinners, and foster table-flatterers, his ambition increased. But it was remarked by many, that his circumstances scarcely warranted the expensive entertainments which he gave. What is splendour, decency, and magnificence in people of rank, in private men is profusion, impertinence, and ostentation.

When Ann was leaving The Braes, after the sumptuous marriage-breakfast, and surrounded by her friends with their alternate tears and smiles, and whose congratulations were never likely to cease, she was most profuse in her protestations of love and affection to her father, making him promise that he would at all times make her house his home whenever it suited him, after which off she dashed in a carriage drawn by four spanking horses, adorned with bouquets, marriage-favours, and all that could give *éclat* to the joyous event.

Within the following year, Margaret Lawson became the wife of Mr. Wild, the surgeon, who resided in the adjoining village; he was a young man who had only recently settled there, and it was said was getting into fair practice. He also wished to have the control of his wife's money; but in his case I likewise peremptorily refused, informing him that it was a rule from which I never deviated.

Grace was now left alone with the old man, but young Henry Murray, a highly respectable, well-informed, and educated, but a poor and industrious farmer, had long been paying marked but modest attentions to her; which, from the length of their attachment, had now ripened into a pure love and affection. In a short time they were also married; and, although there was no parade or display at their quiet wedding, there was a natural simplicity, a confidence and unmistakeable sincerity in their love, that was a certain guarantee for their future happiness and peace.

Grace, when she left The Braes, did all she could to make the old man feel his solitude as little as possible; she gave particular instructions to Mrs. Glen to attend to all his little wants and necessities, and it was agreed amongst the three sisters on the morning of Grace's marriage, that their father should divide his time amongst them, visiting the one after the other, which would be a variety and an amusement to him.

The laird for some time rather *did* enjoy this mode of life, and he was almost constantly seen jogging along the road from the one place to the other, in his antiquated gig, with his sturdy old nag; but for one visit that Grace received at her more humble dwelling from her father, her sisters got two or three. She used often to feel this, but, conscious that she did not deserve it, she tried to stifle the slight, and made no complaints.

CHAPTER II.—COLD HEARTS.

A YEAR or two had passed, and the old laird began by degrees to feel from experience that the irregular and roving life he was leading was not suited to his advanced time of life. He felt that his old easy-chair, with quietness and peace, was more congenial to his feelings; besides, his daughters had now each got families, which occupied their whole attention, and left them little time to give much heed to him, when in his usual routine he made his periodical round. And he also noticed that his visits were not received with the same cordiality by the two eldest daughters as they used to be; and it was, moreover, palpable to him that their hus-

bands now abandoned that respect in their demeanour towards him to which he was entitled, and had been accustomed. Evans, particularly, seemed to have pleasure in taking every opportunity even to insult him, and would indulge in all those vulgarisms of expression which were naturally inherent in his character; accosting the good old laird when he appeared, for instance, in such terms as—"Well, old stick in the mud, *here* again?" So at last the laird, whose delicately modelled mind could not brook this rude and contemptible conduct, curtailed his visits as much as possible to the two eldest, and now more frequently was found at Grace's home, where he was always received and treated by her and her husband with the warmest affection.

However great his sensation at these slights which he now systematically received from his two eldest daughters and their husbands, of which he had a very lively and keen perception, still he managed to disguise his feelings, though painful in the extreme, until he had fully satisfied himself of such being the veritable reality, and it was not long ere he received the most unequivocal proofs that his surmises and mistrusts were truly the case. *Now*, whenever he made his appearance either at Margaret's or Ann's, he saw plainly, from the *coldness* of his reception, and from the indifference, want of respect, and poor accommodation provided for him, that it required little more to convince him that he was far from being a welcome guest.

He consequently made his visits more and more seldom, until they had dwindled down to once a month, and even then, when he did go, he was thrust into some poor apartment, and a bed made for him on the floor! The want of respect was even imbibed by their servants, who he observed, on one or two occasions, scoffed at and made him the subject of their vulgar jests, which did not appear to be discouraged by his daughters.

With Grace and Henry Murray it was far different. When the old man came to *their* door, every kindness and attention that the most tender affection could dictate, was shown him. Henry immediately ran to assist him out of his gig, fed and looked to his horse with his own hand; whilst Grace had him bolstered up in an easy-chair which she had procured for him, his feet put into slippers, and a glass of comfort of some kind or other in his hand, in little or no time; however, he

seemed to be governed by rule, as, although they used every argument to induce him to remain with them for some time, still he never would stop beyond the allotted period.

I had long suspected that his two eldest daughters were not so kind, cordial, and comforting, towards their father as they ought to be; but I was not aware of the full extent of their total want of natural affection, parental respect, and duty, until it was brought to such a climax that it could not be longer concealed.

It was on an afternoon preceding a Christmas-day, when seated at the fireside, in his comfortable easy-chair at The Braes, that the old man took a sudden freak into his head, that he would go and spend the holy week with his children. Mrs. Glen tried to persuade him against it all that lay in her power, and engaged, if he would be induced to remain at home, to send for Mr. and Mrs. Henry Murray to come and spend their Christmas with him, which would afford him far more enjoyment than he would have elsewhere, particularly as he had been lately complaining, and he might suffer from exposure to the weather; but no inducement or argument of any kind of Mrs. Glen's could turn him from his purpose.

It was a cold, bleak afternoon, and had been pouring alternate snow and sleet all the day. When Mrs. Glen saw the laird seated in his open gig, without any thing beyond his usual covering upon him, her heart failed her, and she made another attempt to prevail upon him to remain at home; but he would listen to no reason, and it was with a sorrowful heart that she saw him drive from the door unattended in such a day, having many misgivings that he would suffer severely from such an insane proceeding.

By the time he reached Evans's house, a distance of four miles, he felt himself benumbed and dejected, whilst his long, white, hoary locks were literally frozen to his plaid. Ann, who had seen his approach, met him at the door, evidently annoyed and excited, and, without allowing him to speak, opened a torrent of abuse and invective against the poor old man, wondering "that he could have been so thoughtless as to come amongst them at such a time, when she thought old people and young should never be together, and particularly as Mr. Evans had invited a number of his friends, for whom it would be difficult—indeed, she did not know how she was to make up beds for them all, much less for him."

"The fact is, father," she said, "we cannot have you here to-night—that is the short and the long of it; so you had better turn your horse's head at once, and see what Margaret can do for you. If Mr. Evans were to know of your coming here to-day, I am sure he would be very much put about, indeed."

"Aweel, my bairn," said the old laird, shivering in every limb, "I am sorry that my comin' should in any way have distressed you; but I suppose there is nae harm dune yet, so I'll tak your advice, and gang up and see whether Margaret will gie her auld faither shelter on sic an awfu' nicht. So fare ye weel, dear; I hope ye will a' enjoy yoursels."

And away again he went, with the cold, freezing wind striking sharply on his furrowed face. It was a long and dreary drive, darkness was approaching, and he was compelled to make a virtue of necessity, by allowing his horse to take his own way, as his hands had become so very benumbed as to disable him from holding the reins.

When he reached Wild's house, he felt as if becoming quite torpid, having the wind directly in his face *all* the way from Evans's, and, from its being one of those biting blasts that cuts into the very vitals, he felt so stiff, that it required a good deal of time and assistance ere he could be removed from the gig; and, when he reached the parlour, he felt that if the atmosphere was cold *without*, his reception was more chill *within*.

"Dear me, father," said Margaret, accosting him evidently much chagrined, "what brings you here on such a day as this, and at Christmas time too, when you ought to have known that people had enough to do with their own families and particular friends, without having any additions? I really wonder that Mrs. Glen hadna mair sense than to let you come out in such a storm. You maun gang awa' back again as ye came, for we have positively nae room for you the nicht; and, if Dr. Wild comes in, I am sure he will be very angry with me, indeed, for allowing you to come eyen out of the gig."

The poor laird, who, during this harangue, had sat rubbing and chafing his hands, seemingly unconscious of hearing the half she said, rose to his feet when she had finished. Staggering towards the door, and in a state of stupefaction, he mumbled out, as well as he could, that he was sorry he had

annoyed her, but that he would not be the means of distressing and disturbing them ; that he had hoped to spend his Christmas with some of his family—it would appear that it was not to be so ; “ but God’s will be done, it shall not be me, my dear, that will stand in the way of your enjoyment, or baulk your happiness. Fare ye weel, Maggie, my bairn ; and my warst wish to you is, that you mayna hae a warse guest in your house this nicht than your ain auld faither.”

And, having made this remark, he was again with some difficulty lifted into his gig ; Mrs. Wild taking care, in seeing him fairly out of the house, that she did not expose herself unnecessarily to the cold, or risk the wetting of her feet. The old nag, that seemed to have a knowledge how matters stood, now took the road that led to Henry Murray’s farm.

Grace Murray and her little happy family were all seated around a blazing fire ; she had just prepared tea, in the prospect of enjoying Christmas eve. Cheerfulness, peace, and contentment, beamed in the countenance of every one that composed this happy circle. The storm had increased—the wind more and more continued its wailing—and the hard hailstones were rattling sharply against the window.

“ This is a most tempestuous night,” said Henry.

“ Yes, dearest,” said Grace, “ may God pity the poor creature that is out in this merciless storm ! How thankful we should be, that we have the enjoyment of all these blessings that surround us, which so many are denied ! But what sound is that, Henry, dear—did you not hear a noise like the moving of a horse’s feet ? ”

“ The rain and the whistling of the wind has deceived you, love ; I did not hear any thing.”

A few minutes afterwards, however, the same noise became more audible, accompanied by a sound resembling a stifled groan.

“ Run, dear Henry,” said Grace—“ run to the door ; there is some one most certainly there, and in distress ! ”

And it being by this time dark, lights were brought to the door, and on its being opened, there stood the old well-known horse and gig, with poor Laird Lawson seated in it apparently asleep. Assistance was immediately obtained, when he was lifted out, and carried into the house. The cold had seized his heart, and he was totally prostrated, overcome, and in a state of somnific stupor. He was carried to the front of

the fire, and placed in his easy-chair, and after much rubbing and chafing with spirits and hot flannels, an appearance of animation at last showed itself, when he was carried to his room, where a large fire had been prepared, and having been divested of his dripping clothes, and dry warm flannels supplied in their stead, he was placed in his bed. The nearest resident medical man was immediately sent for, who remained the greater part of the night with his patient, using every endeavour to restore a life that had all but ebbed away.

Henry and Grace never left him for a moment, and all their anxious watch and solicitude was repaid them; for in the course of the morning the good old man, after having had a refreshing sleep, opened his eyes, and, although incoherent in his talking for a time, soon recovered all his faculties; and, ere evening arrived, was again seated in his easy-chair, joining heartily in all the juvenile amusements of the Christmas festival.

When I heard of this unknown and barbarous conduct on the part of his two eldest daughters to their old father, my indignation and contempt was roused to the greatest extent. There was no excuse they could offer that in the least degree could palliate such unheard of cruelty; and the story, which was in a short time pretty well known over the neighbourhood, was the means of considerably abridging the respectability of their different families, as Laird Lawson was generally known and esteemed.

I had been in constant communication with Henry Murray, to whom (as his wife's portion of her father's property had been much less than that of her sisters) I gave the management of the improvements on The Braes' estate, and I never had cause to regret having done so, as I found him not only most intelligent on all agricultural subjects, but in matters of business generally; and my opinion of his talents were such, that I frequently consulted and acted on his advice in the management and the improvements on my own property. Under his direction, therefore, The Braes had been much enhanced in value, and the copper mine was becoming yearly more productive.

We had about eleven thousand pounds to spend, and Dr. Moore agreed with me in thinking, that it could not be employed more beneficially than in following up the general plan of improvement that we had adopted. The house, offices,

and pleasure-grounds, which from neglect had fallen into decay, had also their share of our attention, which, with Henry Murray's good taste, was so improved and beautified as to make The Braes one of the most attractive residences in the district ; besides, the new plantations, which were all thriving remarkably well, gave the whole place almost a new character.

The old laird looked upon all the alterations and improvements going on with apparent indifference ; when his opinion on any point in connection with them was asked, he either gave an indefinite reply, or evaded the question altogether.

As I knew he could not live on the small annuity he had reserved for himself, I was obliged to manœuvre, with the assistance of Mrs. Glen, so that he did not want the comforts he had been accustomed to ; as on one or to occasions, when I offered him pecuniary assistance, he most determinedly refused it. I therefore arranged that Mrs. Glen should receive a weekly allowance nominally for taking charge of the house, but which was virtually expended in providing all the necessaries that the old man should require, and, although regularly supplied, he never seemed to care or know from whence they came.

A beautiful spring succeeded a most inclement winter, when one morning the laird drove up in his old gig to Mr. Evans's door. His daughter was rather astonished to see him, as she had hoped and calculated that she would now be relieved from his visits, but kept up appearances to the world by going to see him now and then to The Braes, and flattered herself that, as she had seen him only twice at their place since that Christmas Eve when she had refused him admittance during the raging of the storm, he had taken the pet, and that she would now be saved the trouble and expense which he subjected her to with (as she told a friend) his odd ways.

Ann received her father, therefore, with a cold indifference, remarking that these long drives were too much for a man at his time of life ; and that, instead of flying about the country in such a mad way, it would be far better for himself and some other people, if he could find something to do, and amuse him at The Braes.

These remarks took place whilst the laird was still standing at the door with the reins in his hand, and he replied—

"I fear you're no far wrang, my bairn ; besides, I, any how, canna bide lang with you this time, as I maun be awa' early in the mornin' again. In the mean time, I will be obliged to you, if you will call the man to assist me to lift out this thing that I hae under the seat o' the gig."

Ann's curiosity was immediately excited to know what her father could have possibly brought with him, and for what reason. She was, therefore, much astonished when a large oaken chest bound with iron, secured with two locks and two padlocks, was, from its immense weight, with the greatest difficulty taken by two men out of the gig, and at his particular and peremptory request carried into the room where he was to sleep for the night : he remarked, that they could not on any account be parted, as where he was there it must be also.

"But, dear me, father," said Ann, "what is within this chest that makes it such an awful weight?"

"There's that within it," replied the laird, "that will be a help to mysel' as lang as I am permitted to remain aboon the sod in this world, and will be mair usefu' still to some that come after me."

In the course of the evening Evans and his wife, when left alone, had a long conference on the subject of the mysterious chest, and they at once came to the conclusion that the old man had, somehow or other, become possessed of an immense amount of treasure, and in his odd and uncouth manner of doing things, perhaps in the apprehension of risking its safety at The Braes, where there were so many strange work-people, had adopted for safety this peculiar manner of protecting it, by, if possible, having it as little out of his sight as circumstances would allow.

"But where can it possibly have come from?" said Evans to his wife.

"I cannot imagine," returned Ann, "excepting it may perhaps be a large sum, with interest, which he once advanced to a young man to enable him to commence business in some foreign parts, and which he has had repaid to him ; and the chest might contain this, and perhaps the laird's share of the large profits that may have accrued from it."

"Be that as it may," said Evans, "we must take care that it does not altogether slip through *our* fingers, and that fellow Murray, that he has lately taken such a fancy to, per-

haps jockeying us out of even a part of it. We must change our tactics with the laird until we can manage to get him to make a will in our favour, and put on the semblance of kindness until this is accomplished."

The sudden change which was produced in the affections of Mrs. Ann Evans towards her father, from the circumstance of his having become possessed of such a great and unexpected amount of property, was most marvellous. She could not do enough to make him comfortable and happy; his every little want was anticipated, and she even went so far as to say, that she thought he might do worse than come and reside with them altogether. That, he said, would be impossible, but he promised to see them as often as he could manage.

The following morning, in the face of all their urgent entreaties that he would remain, at all events, for a few days with them, he took his departure, having first, again with the assistance of two strong men, had the chest replaced in the gig, which seemed made exactly to fit the space beneath the seat, and he now proceeded at his leisure, at his regular jog-trot pace, to Dr. Wild's place, which he reached just as they were sitting down to dinner.

"I do believe that is my father," said Mrs. Wild to her husband, as he drove to the door, "it is really very annoying. I was in hopes that we should have had no more of these troublesome calls; however, we had better just tell him, and give him at once to understand that, our family having increased, we cannot now accommodate him." But when the old man had alighted, and mentioned that he would require assistance to carry this formidable-looking chest from the gig, and when Margaret saw it, it produced a most sudden change, and even magical effect, on her love and affection.

"What in the name of all that's wonderful," said she to her father, "is in it?" as she followed the men who were carrying it, looking as if they would break their backs under the weight.

"Weel, my bairn," he replied, "it has been a blessin' to me, and may be mair sae to them that come after me."

The chest was conveyed to his bed-room according to his particular request, and in doing which Dr. Wild lent his assistance, which being done, the laird locked the door outside, and put the key in his pocket.

There was much speculation with Wild and his wife, in

their turn, as to what the contents of this ponderous chest could be, about which the laird seemed so particular as to its safety, and how he had become possessed of it. Margaret Wild was of opinion that he must have received a large sum out of some of his speculations, when a young man, in which he used to engage.

"I have it," she said, after a pause and a serious thought. "I remember, when I was very young, his mentioning that he had become possessed of a large number of mining shares in Cornwall. Depend upon it that they now have turned to account, and that he has received the produce of them, which perhaps has been accumulating for years."

"Or what would you say," said Wild, "to the possibility of some old friend or connection having left him a large legacy?"

At all events, Dr. and Mrs. Wild were clearly of opinion that some great windfall of fortune had come to him; and, after debating over the matter in the most confidential manner for a considerable time, they came to the sapient resolve that, Margaret being the eldest sister, she alone was entitled to the contents of the chest, whatever they might be—and they there and then determined to make every effort to secure it, if possible during the laird's lifetime, at all events at his death, and for this end they must do all in their power, by showing him the greatest kindness and attention, to ensure his good inclinations in their favour.

"We need not be afraid of Grace baulking us in our scheme," said Mrs. Wild.

"Yes," returned her husband, "but I have my fears; and we must therefore be careful of the subtle and cunning machinations of Evans and his wife, with whom you know we never have been on a cordial footing."

On the following morning the old man made preparations for his departure. Margaret tried by every means to induce him to extend his visit, but he was resolute in his determination to be off.

"Then, why not leave this heavy box where it is?" she said; "you may be sure it will be safe enough."

"Na, na," replied the laird, "that would never do; such a thing is entirely out of the question. It must go where I go, as wherever I am there it *must* be also."

Margaret saw that it would, perhaps, be impolitic to insist

on this further ; so, after having stuffed his capacious pockets, and every corner of the old gig, with refreshments and cordials, she took a most affecting leave of her very *dear, dear* father, exacting from him a positive promise that he would return to them again very soon.

The laird now made the best of his way to Henry Murray's, where he was received by Grace with the same simple and unostentatious affection that she had ever displayed. The chest was the subject of a few remarks as to its weight, &c., and with the usual difficulty was carried into his room. Neither Grace nor Henry had any idea what it might possibly contain ; and, as the laird made no allusion himself on the subject, they did not think it fitting to inquire, nor did they seem to care much about it. If he should say any thing on the subject, it were well and good ; if not, it was no matter, as no doubt he had *good reason* for keeping them in ignorance, and they were too glad to see him well to allow any other consideration to intrude itself. They had, however, their little talk, too, after he had retired to his room, as to the contents of the chest, and Grace thought that perhaps, in rummaging amongst some old papers at The Braes, he might have stumbled upon some valuable documents that had belonged to his father, and which he had converted into money. She hoped, if it was so, that it would be a comfort to him, and that he would enjoy it during his lifetime.

The next morning the chest was again carefully placed in the gig, and Henry accompanied Mr. Lawson to The Braes, to superintend some new improvements in the pleasure-grounds, and additions to the offices which he had ordered to be done, and which Henry had recommended.

The Evanses and Wilds now vied with each other in their affectionate attentions to the laird, who was constantly receiving presents from them, and letters couched in the fondest terms to their dearest father, entreating him to visit them oftener than he did ; and it was a constant bone of contention betwixt them, whenever he showed any disposition to favour the one by the other. Indeed it was likely to have been the cause of an open family feud, had not the laird himself interfered by assuring them that he had no partiality, and that his regard for the one was equal to that for the other. As for Grace she took no interest or part in this caballing, or notice of the sudden change in the feelings of her sisters to-

wards her father, beyond a delight to observe that it was so ; and, which could not fail to make the old man much happier, she felt the most tender and unchanging affection for him she had ever done, and ever would do, and nothing that could make him happy that was in her power would she withhold from him, let the change of circumstances be what they might.

The sisters, never since their marriages, had shown the least disposition to regard her with decent attention or common affection ; on the contrary, they looked down upon Henry and her as far beneath them in their position in society, and treated them accordingly ; and, when they met by chance at The Braes, nothing seemed to afford them greater delight than to be constantly and scornfully slighting and snubbing the mild, gentle, and amiable Grace, until the old man on several occasions found it necessary to interfere, and would say—"Never mind, my dear bairn, keep a gude heart ; wi' a' their airs and graces, you may perhaps be as gude as them yet, if God spares you, and aiblins a trifle better."

CHAPTER III.—THE ECLAIRCISSEMENT.

I HAD now frequent visits from the laird in the course of his peregrinations. He seemed all of a sudden to have taken a great interest in the improvement of The Braes, and was particular in his inquiries as to the application of the funds ; how much the value of the property had been enhanced, and had several private and mysterious interviews with Mr. Lane, our solicitor ; but to us all, although frequently asked, he either evaded the question, or was totally silent, as to the contents of the chest which constantly continued to accompany him. He now resided, according to circumstances, for irregular periods with his daughters, from whom he never failed to receive a most hearty apparent welcome, particularly from the Evanses, who seemed to be flourishing in the world. Evans had extended his business, and removed to a much larger house, and was now principally engaged in extensive building contracts, in which he was assisted by a practical tradesman of the name of Gable, a person with whom he had been long connected in business, but who did not bear the

best of characters. This individual used to make a periodical visit to The Braes, and on those occasions took accurate notes of all that was going on in regard to the new buildings, &c., which, he remarked, ought to have been all done by Mr. Evans; he also made particular observations as to the working of the mine, &c., &c.

Henry Murray, although often annoyed by the interference of this person, who would rather, in an authoritative style, countermand orders given by him to the workmen, submitted to these insults with patience for a long time; until at last, from its frequent occurrence, he was compelled to make a complaint on the subject to me, when I instructed him to apprise Mr. Gable when he next came, that he should allow no intermeddling with his arrangements, of which he had the sole responsibility and the entire control; and to inform him that such were my express orders.

Evans, to whom Gable delivered this message, came fuming and blustering himself one day, threatening to make us all suffer for what he called our most insulting conduct, in preventing his factor from superintending the progress of the different alterations on a property which doubtless would eventually be his own, as he now possessed the means of buying up the other two proprietors; when he would then show both Mr. G—— and Dr. Moore that he was as good, and perhaps a better man than either of them.

"When men of infamy to grandeur soar,
They light a torch to show their shame the more."

Dr. and Mrs. Wild called now also very frequently at The Braes, and made long and loud complaints against the large sums of money that had been expended, the whole blame of which they attributed to Henry Murray, whose recommendations and suggestions had been adopted by the trustees without consideration; but he would require an account of all these delinquencies some day, now very soon; to all which Henry lent a deaf ear, and at our request he continued his work as if he had never been molested.

Laird Lawson still continued his periodical little journeys from the one house to the other, following the same routine, still conveying the oaken chest with him; and both himself and his old nsg never lacked a hearty welcome, and the best entertainment that the different houses could afford.

I noticed, however, one day when he called upon me, a sad falling off in his appearance, with a physical frailty and aberration of intellect, which gave every indication that he was fast failing; so much so, that I one day recommended that he should have a servant to accompany him now in his drives, but this proposal he would not listen to.

It was rather late one night when he reached Henry Murray's. Grace's quick sympathetic eye noticed, on his getting out of the gig, that he looked very exhausted, and his usual spirits sunk and depressed. She prevailed on him to retire early to rest, and in the morning, when she went to his room, she found him in a very languid state; he said he had suffered much from a benumbed feeling during the night, but that he would endeavour to get up, as he meant to return to The Braes without loss of time. Grace tried to persuade him to remain, when she would have it more in her power to nurse and attend to him; but he seemed so bent upon being at home, that she did not attempt further to contradict him. Henry, therefore, determined to accompany him; and as he was about going, and the chest being brought out to be placed in the gig as usual, he said—

"I think you need not mind it this time; let it remain where it is: I believe I have derived all the good from it that I shall require."

When they reached The Braes, the poor old laird was found to be in a very alarming state, and by the time the doctors arrived, he had sunk considerably; all his daughters were now with him, and in their different ways displayed the extent of their feelings. Margaret and Ann, with wringing of hands, and incapable of exertion, were violent and loud in the exhibition of their grief; whilst Grace, whose pale and expressive countenance showed the depth and intensity of her sorrow, like a pure celestial spirit kept sitting softly and silently around her father's bed, either smoothing his pillow, administering a composing cordial, or tenderly breathing in his ear a soothing and comforting prayer, with cheering words of consolation and hope. She shed no tears, nor did she find vent for her anguish until all was over, when, in her own private apartment, removed from all observation, she burst forth, and gave full indulgence to that overburdened grief which she had so long, with so much difficulty, endeavoured to suppress.

Immediately on hearing of Mr. Lawson's death, Dr. Moore and I, with Mr. Lane our solicitor, proceeded to The Braes, when we sealed up all his secretaries, papers, &c.; we found the whole family had assembled. Evans, rather authoritatively required to know where the oaken chest was which the deceased had so long carried about with him; and, on being informed that he had left it on his last visit under the charge of Mr. Murray, he requested that it might be sent to his place, he being the proper custodian of it. Wild maintained that it ought to be brought to *his* house, having married the eldest daughter, and remain in his charge until it was regularly opened, after the funeral, in presence of the trustees and all the members of the family. Henry Murray said he conceived it was safe enough where it was, and did not see any reason for removing it until after the funeral, which would be in a day or two at the furthest.

As this discussion was likely to end in an unseemly contest at such a time, I put a stop to it by saying that I should take charge of the chest, myself sealing it and placing it in the strong room of the bank. Evans acceded to this proposal with a growl, and Wild also gave a sullen assent, whilst Murray cheerfully agreed, and volunteered to assist and see it conveyed in safety to the bank.

Mr. Lawson, with all his eccentricities of character, had ever been much and deservedly respected: his warm and benevolent heart, free from every selfish tendency—his inoffensive habits, his liberal dispositions, his extensive charities when he had it in his power, and his simple and primitive manner—never failed to secure him friends. His death, therefore, excited the greatest regret, and the consequence was that a large assemblage of all ranks followed him to the grave; and numerous indigent old persons had much cause to lament the loss of one who had many a time and oft administered to their wants, and comforted their hearts when in affliction with a kind word and a soothing look, shedding tears of sincerity and sympathy whilst listening to the details of their woes or misfortunes.

After the funeral, all the several members of the family returned to The Braes, to witness the opening of the different depositories of the deceased. There were congregated the three daughters with their husbands; there were their five aunts as large as life, having increased in bulk considerably

since we last parted with them; then there was Evans's solicitor, and a personal friend of Dr. Wild's from the village (who was reputed to be cunning in the law), both to watch the interests of their employers; Mr. Lane also, our solicitor, was in attendance, with Dr. Moore and myself.

I had ordered the oaken chest to be conveyed from the bank that morning, the keys of which had been found concealed in one of the secret drawers of the principal desk of the deceased.

When all the company were become completely settled and composed, Mr. Lane suggested that Mr. Lawson's private depositories and papers should, in the first instance, be examined and disposed of; but the impatience manifested, particularly by the lady portion of the assemblage, was such to know its contents, that they insisted on the mysterious chest having their first attention; and it was accordingly dragged forward by our solicitor.

The seals which had been placed on the different locks were torn off, and all eyes were fixed upon Mr. Lane, full of expectation, curiosity, and excitement; and when he applied the keys, and was about to open this mysterious chest, the sensation was deep, eager, and intense. Dr. Wild, who for some time had been engaged in a whispering conversation with his legal friend, at this critical moment cried—"Stop! before proceeding further in this business, of course it is *distinctly* understood that I, as the husband of the eldest daughter, shall have the right of the first choice when the contents of this chest (which will likely be found to be composed of miscellaneous property) is allotted in the three portions."

"I am not sure about that," observed Evans; "it is a matter of some importance which I think should be decided by our drawing lots. Besides, I don't see that Mr. Murray should participate at all in the division of this property, as he has no doubt feathered his nest well during his superintendence of the different works at The Braes. At all events, he can only be entitled to his fifth share, as stated in the settlement of the late Mr. Lawson, and upon this I have had legal advice."

Henry Murray, in reply to these remarks, merely observed—"That he had got credit from his employers for acting honestly during his superintendence at The Braes, and he

would leave it to be decided by the trustees whether he was entitled to a share of the contents of the chest, and, if so, what proportion."

These knotty points having been settled by reference to me, Mr. Lane again produced the keys, and with some difficulty removed the padlocks, and opened the ponderous box. On the lid being raised, the first thing that presented itself was a large sheet of parchment, under which was stuffed a multitude of old newspapers, which one by one were removed, until he reached the last covering (a piece of black calico) of this abstruse and visionary treasure. The general feeling at this moment was almost painfully thrilling. The excitement had reached its *acme*—

"There was silence deep as death,
And the boldest held his breath
For a time"—

when Mr. Lane, who was now regarded by all as the mystagogue, paused for a minute or two, gave one expressive look to the assembly around him, distinctly signifying as plain as words could have expressed it—

"NOW FOR THE GRAND SECRET!"

At length he withdrew the last covering, and the contents were exposed to the common gaze. The chest was found to contain two ponderous blocks of granite, hewn and fashioned so as exactly to fit it, on the top of which was placed a massive wooden mallet with a scroll attached to the handle, on which was inscribed in large characters—

"THIS IS A MELL,
THE MAN TO FELL,
THAT GIES A' TO HIS BAIRNS
AND KEEPS NOCHT TO HIMSEL'."

When Mr. Lane had finished reading this pristine distich. (which he did with much solemnity), it was followed by a titter from all those who were not interested, which at last burst into irresistible shouts of laughter. Evans and Wild, however, looked daggers; the former remarked of the deceased that he had been a cunning old dotard, and the latter that his life had been one course of duplicity and deception.

"However," said Evans, "he has not been able to deprive us of his lands and other property, and I shall now require of you, Mr. G—— and Dr. Moore, a full and particular account of all the monies you have advanced to Murray, to carry out what you have called the improvements on the estate ; and I must also be satisfied that he has applied these sums in terms of the stipulations contained in the settlement of the late Mr. Lawson, and to this end I am advised to institute an action at law against all concerned."

"Not just so fast," said Dr. Moore, mildly ; "we are very desirous to save you both expense, and perhaps much trouble, which you will admit we are justified in doing, on your being informed of a *little* fact, of which, from the style of your conversation, you seem to be unaware."

"There is nothing I require to be informed of," returned Evans, "as long as the settlement is in existence, of which your own solicitor has been the custodian."

"Which now is null and void," remarked Mr. Lane : "you must know that it only held good during Mr. Lawson's lifetime, at whose death it becomes a worthless piece of parchment."

"I was not cognizant certainly of this fact before," said Wild, with the appearance of considerable apprehension.

"Nor was I," said Evans ; "and I don't believe it."

"Neither did I know of this !" exclaimed Mrs. Wild.

"Nor did I !" screamed Mrs. Evans.

"That is a point that can very soon be settled," said Mr. Lane, "as I happen to have the document with me, which you can all either peruse now or at your leisure, as best suits you."

"Still," said Evans, almost mad with rage, "that does not prevent our succession to the property regularly and legally ; and I again repeat that I am determined to enforce by all lawful means an exact account from Murray of the monies he has received for the last few years, and how every penny has been expended, and will absolve him from all responsibility *only* on one condition, viz., that he relinquishes all claim to his wife's share of his succession to the property."

"Stop a bit, again," said Dr. Moore, interrupting him ; "there is another document in Mr. Lane's possession which may change the aspect of affairs, and prevent your putting into execution threats which might prove abortive and without avail."

"And, pray, what is that?" said Evans, with a look of rage and defiance.

"Merely," replied Mr. Lane, "that Mr. Lawson, shortly before his death, executed a WILL; and as this is the proper time to read it, I will now do so, if you will permit me."

"Oh, certainly!" said Evans, in a faltering tone of voice, and turning very cadaverous.

Upon this Mr. Lane took the will from his pocket; and having gone through the preamble, in which the testator cancelled and annulled all former settlements, he proceeded to read the principal clauses, which were—

"Firstly,—I hereby give and bequeath to my daughter, Grace Murray, her heirs and executors, all and whole my lands called Braes, in the parish of G——, with the mines, plantations, buildings, and tenements of every description thereon; and I likewise bequeath to her, as aforesaid, all my household furniture, cash, pictures, books, plate, with all my goods and chattels of every description whatever.

"Secondly,—I leave to my other two daughters, Margaret Wild and Ann Evans, the sum of fifty pounds each per annum, to be paid from the rental of the said estate of Braes, through Henry Murray, my son-in-law, whom I hereby appoint the sole executor of this my last testament.

"Thirdly,—I leave to Robert Evans and Thomas Wild, my two other sons-in-law, each, one of the granite stones which will be found in my oaken chest at my death, as emblems of their hearts, in grateful remembrance of, and in return for, the *disinterested* hospitality which they ever exercised towards me during my lifetime."

Mr. Lane having finished reading the will, which caused a great sensation amongst all present, rose and shook Mr. and Mrs. Murray warmly by the hand; an example which was followed by Dr. Moore and myself, tendering them our sincere and hearty congratulations, and the hope that they might long live to enjoy their good fortune.

Grace, who during the whole scene had sat apparently unmoved, in a corner of the room—

"Like patience on a monument, smiling at grief,"

now burst into tears, exclaiming—"My dear—dear father!"

and retired to her chamber, where, on her knees, she offered up her thanksgivings to Him from whom flows every good gift, and prayed that she might be strengthened to bear her change of fortune with becoming humility, and be made the instrument, judiciously, to dispense a portion of her now ample means, for the benefit of her suffering, destitute, and helpless fellow-creatures.

Mr. Lane now inquired of Wild and Evans if they would wish to have attested copies of the will, and former settlements?

"Hell and the devil!" shouted Evans, furious with rage; "I shall make you all repent this—'tis a foul and vile conspiracy to deprive my wife of her rights, and I shall have justice if there be law in the land."

Wild, whose legal friend had continued whispering to him during all the proceedings, demanded a copy of the will, observing that he was determined to have the validity of it strictly scrutinized; as he had no doubt that the old man had been tampered with, and that this settlement had been made at the instigation, and by the cunning and deceitful machinations of Murray and his wife. As for the annuity of fifty pounds, he, and he was sure Mr. Evans also, would never accept a penny of it.

Henry Murray here declared that, until he had heard the will read at that time, he was entirely ignorant of its contents, or that such a document even existed.

This fact was corroborated by Mr. Lane, who averred that no one but himself, his two clerks who witnessed it, and Mr. Lawson himself, had the most distant knowledge of the existence of such a document until this morning.

"But I will prove," said Evans, "that Mr. Lawson was quite a dotard and a lunatic, incapable and disqualified from making a settlement. Nothing further is necessary," he said, "as an evidence of this than the oaken chest before us, which he carried about with him from place to place for years."

"In that respect, I beg decidedly to differ in opinion with you," I remarked; "as the very fact you mention exhibited, in my notion and judgment, a very great amount of sagacity and discrimination of character, now when we know the motives that prompted him to use this most pardonable little piece of deception."

"Murray," cried Evans boiling with rage, addressing Henry, "*you* shall be made, to your cost, to repent the part you have acted in this affair, as I quite agree with Dr. Wild in the conviction that *you* have been at the bottom of the plot; and whatever you may say in your endeavour to convince us to the contrary, we are confident it has been perpetrated by *your* instrumentality *alone*, and I therefore now publicly denounce you as a false, fraudulent, and most deceitful person—so look to your character!"

"Talk not to me of character, Evans," replied Murray, with spirit and determination; "my hands are clean, sir. There is no 'damned spot' upon them; no taint, as on yours, which all the perfumes in Arabia will not sweeten. Therefore I regard you not, or any outrage, invective, or abuse of me that you may indulge in. *You* are known, Evans, and so am *I*; and I feel confident that, go where you will, no well-disposed person will listen to you for a moment when uttering such wicked and unfounded slanders."

To stop further controversy, and to prevent a continued interchange of similar virulent remarks, I observed that, as the business and object of the meeting was at an end, I did not see any occasion for prolonging it further. Wild and Evans upon this rose and left the room, muttering vengeance, and threatening to take immediate legal proceedings, which, however, never were carried into effect.

When Grace and Henry Murray succeeded to the property, the latter had almost completed the improvements and alterations upon it, and the estate, from the extensive draining, &c., was in the finest state of cultivation; and, besides, a new vein had been discovered in the mine of the richest description, for the produce of which a ready and lucrative market was found, and, as the lode was ascertained to extend to a great distance, it promised to yield a large revenue. In a short time Mr. and Mrs. Murray removed to The Braes, where they reared and educated their fine family, three boys and a girl. Grace, whose amiability, ladylike demeanour, and accomplishments, qualified her for society of the first rank, was admired and caressed wherever she went. She established a school in the village on the estate for poor children, and many were the blessings that were called forth from hundreds of poor creatures who shared in her benevolence.

Henry, from his education, appearance, and manners, was not long taking the position in society to which he was entitled, and in time became one of the leading men in the county.

It is painful to draw the contrast, and revert to those other characters who have taken prominent parts in this simple story, but it is necessary to do so to complete our narrative.

From the day of Laird Lawson's death neither Wild nor Evans seemed to thrive: it was now well known how they had treated him, and it was also known the stratagem he had used to obtain common civility from them, and the world (bad as it is often erroneously called) in the end leans to the cause of humanity, and sooner or later punishes those who are guilty of a breach of it.

Wild's practice dropped gradually off, and he at last, after a hard struggle to make a living, finding that he could not succeed, gave himself up to dissipation, and died a confirmed drunkard.

Evans, after the disappointment he met with in his hopes of succession to The Braes, dashed recklessly into the wildest speculations, which, however, did not last long, as he soon became deplorable and totally bankrupt, reduced to the greatest poverty, without a friend to help or comfort him. He now felt the value of his wife's fifty pounds' annuity, which he had so much despised; without which, and the kindness of Grace, who was constantly giving to them, they might have literally starved.

A splendid mausoleum has lately been erected by public subscription, on a prominent elevation in D—— churchyard, over the old man's remains, so that no stranger can have difficulty in finding the last resting-place of the good and lamented LAIRD LAWSON.

The Lost Heir.

CHAPTER I.—THE REPROBATE.

AMONGST the many other important trusts in which I was concerned there was one, the different incidents and events connected with which I can never cease to think of but with the greatest interest, affording me as it did another instance (although happily of rare occurrence) of the wickedness which we sometimes find inherent in the human heart, and the punishment, even in this world, that almost invariably, sooner or later, awaits those who deviate from the paths of virtue, honesty, and truth.

Mr. Henry Temple, a gentleman of considerable funded property, which he had acquired in business as a colonial merchant, came on the death of his father to reside on his paternal estate in our neighbourhood, satisfied with what he had gained by his industry, although comparatively yet a young man. He had been the companion of my youth, and our friendship continued steady and unimpaired. Although retired in a measure from business, he could not divest himself of the habit he had imbibed, of trafficking in the government stocks, the movements of which he had made the study of his life. We used frequently to speculate a little, when a favourable opportunity occurred, on joint account, and were generally fortunate; in consequence of this, I had a visit from him almost daily at the bank. Mr. Temple was a man of a thousand; his society used to afford me the greatest delight, from the amiability of his disposition, his experience of the world, and his gentlemanly manners.

A few miles from the family estate there resided, in a cottage Mr. Temple had settled upon him, Mark, his younger and only brother, who lived upon an annuity willed from their father's estate, and who seemed to follow no steady or

regular employment. His brother often heard of him being occasionally engaged in horse-dealing, and consequently associating with characters who were by no means creditable, and with whom, his brother was mortified to learn, he spent days and nights in dissipation ; a more perfect contrast therefore, between the two brothers, in their habits and general position, can scarcely be imagined. Mark had connected himself with a young woman in humble life, but of pious and respectable parents ; she was a mild and retiring creature, and was the means, for some years after their marriage, of withdrawing him from those scenes and associates which were as destructive to his respectability as they were to his means. However, the old leaven after a time began again to show itself ; his wife's influence had lost its effect, he was constantly in poverty, and never ceased in making applications to his brother for assistance ; and he again, in spite of the constant and earnest importunities and entreaties of his wife, retrograded to his former habits, and from less to more became totally abandoned, reckless, and regardless of character.

To a mind constituted like his brother's, these reports, which constantly reached his ears, of Mark's proceedings, could not fail to give him much uneasiness and distress. He had heard of many acts of which he had been guilty, and of having in several instances narrowly escaped the punishment he had exposed himself to, from an open defiance and disregard of the laws. His brother made every endeavour by kindness and persuasion to restrain him, but all was without effect : a circumstance, however, occurred, which stopped his career for a time.

He one day appeared at the bank, and presented a forged cheque for payment on his brother. The forgery was immediately discovered ; and, on my calling him into my room, he was informed that my intention was to give him immediately into custody. On this he became deadly pale and livid, losing all nerve, and implored my pardon and forgiveness ; promised reformation, wringing his hands, and crying like a child. I told him that I had no choice ; I was, on public grounds, bound to give him up for examination before a magistrate—a duty that I would not consider myself justified in neglecting, let the consequences be what they might.

He now entreated me, as it was a matter of life and death, to send for his brother and wife. To this I did not object.

His poor wife, who first made her appearance, was in a sad state of agony and distress when she learned the awful situation in which her husband was placed. She made every appeal to my heart that nature and humanity could suggest, under which I had almost given way; but I had powerful reasons for sustaining the appearance of consistency and determination. When Mr. Henry Temple came, we had a long private interview; and, after much discussion, we at last coincided in opinion that this would be a good opportunity to bind him to good conduct, by keeping this matter *in terrorem* over him. I therefore, with much apparent reluctance, which I informed him was solely on account of his wife, and the shame that his conviction and ignominious death would bring upon his family name, gave him his liberty; but under the express stipulation that he would entirely abandon his wicked course of life, and his vile associates, and take to some honest employment; and, once for all, I warned him, should I ever hear of his reverting to his former habits, or giving cause of uneasiness in any way to his brother, by whose intercession he was now set at liberty, that I should without hesitation hand him over to the public prosecutor for the crime of forgery, and for that purpose would retain the document as my proof.

Terror of the consequences, if he failed to follow my injunctions, I suppose, kept him correct for two or three years, as I heard little of him excepting that, by the assistance of his kind brother, he had taken a small farm, and was so far industrious, although not by any means respected or liked in the neighbourhood, it having become known that he abused his poor uncomplaining wife; and, from being debarred from frequenting the public-house, he had often caused alarm in the neighbourhood by his rioting, and abuse of those dependent on him, the result of his giving himself up to solitary dissipation.

This continued mode of life the strongest constitution could not long endure: he was at last laid up with a violent attack of fever and ague, and for ten days his life was despaired of. Whilst in this state of prostration, his repentance seemed complete; he expressed in the strongest terms the sorrow he endured on taking a retrospect of his past life, and faithfully promised that, if he were spared, he would become a wiser and a better man.

"*Hell is paved with good intentions*"—he became worse and worse on our hands, and his recovery was scarcely complete when he had resorted to his old pernicious habits.

"The devil was sick, the devil a monk would be;
The devil grew well, the devil a monk was he."

One morning he waited upon his brother, and told him that he was tired of his occupation (after having been in his farm for some years). He said that all he could make was a bare living—that he from daily experience found that he had lost caste in this country, and his feelings were constantly lacerated from the neglect and insult he received from those who had formerly professed to be his friends, with the knowledge that he was always under my surveillance, and in terror, as he did not know the moment that the iron grasp of the law might be down upon him—he therefore had resolved on emigration to Canada, and said he had come to request his brother's assistance to enable him to accomplish this object.

Mr. Henry Temple was too glad to comply with his request, and to coincide with him in opinion, the more so as he had shortly before married a lady of high family, and both amiable and accomplished, to whom he had been long attached, and the conduct of Mark was the only alloy to their happiness.

It was therefore a matter of some congratulation to my friend when he saw his scapegrace brother fairly shipped, even although he had the cruelty to leave his wife behind, who was in the expectation of very soon becoming a mother.

Acting upon the advice of my friend and tenant, Mr. Alexander Sloan of Beechwood, who knew the value of almost every acre of land in the county, Mr. Temple purchased two large estates nearly adjacent to his paternal property, and to every human appearance was favoured with all that could contribute to happiness in this world, as he also was in the expectation and hope of being blessed with an heir to his large possessions; but a most calamitous event occurred, which totally changed the aspect of affairs, and cast a gloom over our whole district.

Mr. Temple one morning left his young and interesting wife in high spirits, for the purpose of following the hounds, which were to meet a few miles from his house; and his wife, proud of her husband, came out to admire him mounted on

his recently purchased and favourite hunter, and attired in his scarlet coat.

"I think your horse appears rather restive this morning," she remarked; "my dear Harry, be careful."

His reply was a kiss of his hand and a smile of confidence, when off he scampered.

He never returned alive. He was conveyed home that night a mangled corpse—his horse had taken fright whilst hunting, threw and dragged him fully twenty yards; and, before assistance could reach him, life was extinct.

I was immediately sent for to render all the support and consolation to his poor widow that lay in my power; but this was a task far beyond human possibility to accomplish. Poor Mrs. Temple was that night seized with premature labour, and died after giving birth to a fine healthy boy.

This was now indeed a house of mourning. My feelings of sorrow and anguish were inexpressible. I was at a loss how to act under such trying circumstances. In much agony and tribulation, I despatched a messenger immediately with the request that my wife would join me without loss of time. On her arrival, her first cause of solicitude was for the dear orphan. What was to be done for a nurse? not one could be heard of. At last Mrs. G—— remembered that Mrs. Mark Temple had been delivered two weeks previously of a still-born babe, and it immediately struck us that she would be the best and most natural nurse for this sweet residue of my lamented friend. A close carriage was therefore sent to her cottage, in which she immediately returned; and our joy was inexpressible, when she pressed this innocent to her bosom, and we saw it greedily partake of that nourishment which nature supplies. Mrs. Mark Temple, now at my request, took up her abode and became permanently settled at Rookvale with her interesting charge, to which she daily became as much, and even more attached, if possible, than she could have been to her own child.

The most striking and mournful deaths of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Temple, on the day of their funeral cast a gloom over the whole country around; the lamentations of all ranks who followed them to the grave were universal. On perusing his will, it was found that, after providing amply for his wife, and specifying several legacies to old servants, and in the event of his dying without issue, he left the whole of his

unentailed property, including his lands, houses, tenements, with his cash (a large balance of which lay deposited in our bank), plate, furniture, books, jewels, to be applied in founding an hospital for the maintenance and education of a hundred orphan boys, sons of, decayed merchants, and appointed Mr. Alexander Sloan and myself as trustees upon his settlement.

We lost no time, but immediately proceeded to take an inventory of all the moveables of the deceased, amongst which we found a number of valuable gems, and particularly a set of costly diamonds which Mr. Temple had presented to his wife on the occasion of their marriage, and, having sealed all up, we deposited them in a room in the mansion, having seen it well secured.

Three months had scarcely elapsed when Mark Temple, who had heard of the death of his brother, returned from Canada, as I expected he would. I was not taken by surprise, therefore, when he called upon me one morning at the bank, to ascertain, as far as he was concerned, the nature of his brother's will. I informed him that his name had not been mentioned at all in it, but that an allowance would be made to him and his wife, for the purpose of keeping up the establishment at Rockvale with respectability, until the young heir should come of age, when it would then remain with him to make his arrangements for the future, should he be spared until that period arrived. In the mean time, I hoped that, when he took up his residence there, he would not in any way compromise its respectability. Many weeks, however, had not elapsed, ere I heard that his constant companion was a person of the name of Fenton, one of his old associates, a horse-dealer of very questionable character, who, I was informed, he intended to send out to Canada, to superintend the management of a large grant of valuable land he had obtained through the influence and means of his brother from government, and he informed me, on questioning him, that his constant intercourse with Fenton was in consequence of the necessary arrangements that he required to make with him on that subject. Being made aware of these circumstances, I took no further notice at the time of this objectionable connection.

About two years had elapsed, when I one day called at Rockvale, as was frequently my custom, to see little Henry,

who had hitherto been a most healthy and promising child ; and was much grieved to find the village doctor in attendance upon him, who told me he had had a threatening of croup ; was again better, but would require to be watched, as a return might be attended with great danger. I gave particular instructions that every care should be taken of him in my absence, being at the time obliged to visit London, where I had business to transact that would occupy me for some weeks. I had not been absent for more than a fortnight, when it was with the greatest sorrow I received letters from Mr. Sloan, my co-trustee, and Mark Temple, announcing to me the most sudden death of my dear young charge. Words could not express my poignant grief at this event.

On my return, after the lapse of a few weeks, I found a total change of affairs at Rockvale : Mark Temple had taken formal possession of his paternal property, as next heir of entail. Bill Fenton and his wife had sailed for Canada, and Mrs. Mark Temple, apparently broken-hearted for the loss of her foster-child, gradually pined away, and did not survive him more than a few months.

We invested Mr. Temple's property to the best advantage, that its accumulation might enable us, in the course of years, to fulfil more judiciously his bequest ; and, without tampering with the seals, had the chests and packages containing the plate, jewels, &c., removed for safety to the strong room at the bank.

I had another event to deplore, about two years after this, which affected me fully as much as the former, in the violent death of my much respected friend, Mr. Sloan, the particulars of which I have already given. It was a sad blow to me, and I was now consequently left sole executor upon Mr. Temple's large and extensive estates, which year after year increased in importance and value.

My late friend Mr. Sloan's family, after a time, began to claim much of my attention ; the young people had grown up ; my once *little* friend Nelly could scarcely now be recognised as the tall, beautiful, and accomplished Miss Ellen Sloan.

Alexander, an active and very intelligent youth, managed his late father's farm and estate, and his youngest sister, Lucy, seemed devoted to her mother and domestic employments.

Mr. Sloan had a brother, the younger partner of a large mercantile house in Liverpool, who for two years had had a youth in their office, who had been sent to their charge with the highest recommendations by their correspondents, a Quaker firm in Montreal, and from his intelligence, assiduity in business, and amiability of disposition, had become a favourite, not only with every member of the establishment, but with all who knew him. His expression was that of perfect good-humour and candour; he was tall, handsome, and manly, and, like all who have seen much of the world, was frank, generous, and ingenuous. He had all the bearings of having had a highly accomplished education. His manners and movements were that of a perfect gentleman, which in his instance was a natural gift, and which in perfection is seldom acquired.

From the indefatigable application of young Henry Morton (for that was his name) to business at all hours, his health began to suffer, which caused some little anxiety to his employers; and a change of air and scene being recommended, Mr. Sloan thought he could not do better than send him down for a few weeks on a visit to his sister at Beechwood.

During his stay, which was protracted beyond the limit he had allowed himself, Alexander Sloan and he became inseparable friends; every morning some new excursion or sport was planned for the day, and the young ladies contributed their talents and accomplishments in music to amuse them in the evenings, so that the time flew rapidly over, when it became necessary for Henry to return to business. It was a day of much and general regret, therefore, when the morning arrived that he was to take his departure from Beechwood: he had endeared himself to all. There was not a cottar or herd for miles around who was not present to bid him adieu, and who, with hats in hand, gave him their blessings and prayers that God would speed and prosper him; but there was one whose feelings, on parting with him, were of a more ardent and indelible nature than all the others, and which was reciprocated with equal tenderness. A mutual and fervent attachment had ripened betwixt Henry Morton and Ellen Sloan during his visit at Beechwood, and on his return to Liverpool, with the consent of Mrs. Sloan, a correspondence had been kept up between them for a considerable time

ere I was made aware of it ; and when she informed me, as Ellen's guardian, of the circumstance, I immediately wrote to his employers, requesting to know the character he bore, &c., to which I received the most satisfactory reply ; but beyond the very high testimonial they sent me of his steadiness, industry, and talents, they could give me no information, not having been informed as to his family connections, &c., by their correspondents at Montreal.

On the following Christmas, Henry Morton again paid a visit to his friends at Beechwood, and was received now, with my full sanction, as the accepted lover of Ellen Sloan. When I first met him, I was struck with an indescribable something in his expression, the tone of his voice, and his whole manner, which riveted my attention and interest in him, and this feeling increased the oftener we met. The same impressions were experienced by my wife, on being for the first time introduced to him. He often joined the young people from Beechwood when they visited us, and became a great favourite with us all ; so much so, that it was a matter of congratulation to me that my dear young friend Ellen had the prospect of being united to a youth of such merit and promise, and I hoped ere long he would be in a condition to offer his now affianced bride a respectable settlement in life, in which her own fortune would be the means of assisting him. I was the more disposed to expect this would soon be the case, from the circumstance that, in my communication from the Liverpool house, it was mentioned that, in the event of the head of the firm retiring, which was looked for soon, Mr. Henry Morton would be made a partner.

CHAPTER II.—THE HEIR RESTORED.

LET us now return to Mark Temple, whom we left, after having taken possession of Rockvale, on the death of his nephew. I had not seen him for a length of time ; his accession to the family estate had not much contributed to raise him in the estimation of the surrounding gentry ; and his continued dissipated habits had rendered him a confirmed and hopeless sot. Fenton and his wife, who had returned

from Canada, to all appearance not much improved in circumstances, and who had settled in the village, seemed now to be Mark's only visitors; they had sold his land in Canada to advantage, and afterwards resided some years in Montreal, previous to their returning to England, living on part of the proceeds that had been allowed them by Mark. I was reluctantly forced to visit him in consequence of having discovered, after Mr. Sloan's death, that the casket which contained Mrs. Henry Temple's jewels had been plundered of a most valuable diamond and ruby bracelet and brooch; the seal upon the box that contained the gems had been broken, and replaced by a cunningly executed impression taken from it. Mark of course denied all knowledge of the theft, which he maintained must have taken place at the bank, and, after the lapse of such a number of years, it was not likely that it would have been discovered sooner had it taken place at Rockvale. I was, however, far from being satisfied with this explanation, knowing the loose characters he had had constantly about him during the time the chests containing those, with the other valuables, were left at Rockvale, and which, during the life of my co-trustee, we had from time to time delayed converting into cash. I made every exertion, by advertising in the papers, giving information, with descriptions of the articles, to the different authorities, in the hope of recovering them; but it was all without avail, and I had given up every expectation of success, when one morning, after the lapse of six months, an officer brought a lad in custody to me at the bank, whom he had charged with offering at the shop of a jeweller in town a very valuable ruby for sale, and as it was thought extraordinary that he should possess such a gem, and would give no account from whom he had received it, he had been consequently detained, and brought to me as a magistrate for examination. On my first glance at it, I was immediately struck with the resemblance it bore to a part of the stolen property, and, by means of threats of punishment if he remained silent, the boy at last confessed that he had received it from the wife of a man named Fenton, to dispose of for her. Upon this I forthwith issued a warrant for the apprehension of Mrs. Fenton, who, being brought before me and interrogated, said, she had received the jewel from Mr. Mark Temple; and, on being still further pressed, made a confession of such an extra-

ordinary and startling nature, as to cause me to issue similar warrants against Mark Temple and William Fenton, for their immediate apprehension, all of whom were committed to prison upon more than one serious charge.

On search being made at their different houses, there was found in Mrs. Fenton's possession several articles of infant's apparel, which were known to have belonged to little Henry Temple, with letters and documents found in Mark's desks, which afforded the most undeniable proofs that the infant had been kidnapped by the Fentons, and carried with them when they sailed for America; and that his alleged death was a piece of villany, managed with the assistance of the village surgeon, now dead, who was doubtless well-remunerated for the part he took in the fraud, which enabled Mark Temple to become temporary proprietor of the family estate of Rockvale. I now determined, by every means in my power, to learn whether or not Henry Temple was in the land of the living; and, as the prisoners were all stubborn and doggedly silent on the subject, and would afford me no information, or the least means by which I could trace the crimes, I should have been at a loss how to act, had not a favourable opportunity offered itself at the time, which afforded me the means of inquiry.

I had occasion to write, on the business of the bank, to our correspondents at Montreal, in which I made particular inquiries on the subject in my letter; and their reply, which I will now transcribe verbatim, will show with what success:—

"MONTREAL, 15th Day Seventh Month, 18—.

"RESPECTED FRIENDS,—We were duly favoured with thy much-esteemed letter of 23rd of last month, and now return thee thy bills on Simon Barke, per £530; on Firmin, Snyder, & Co., per £380; and upon Holland, Todd, & Pelligrini, per £748—duly accepted; and, being all responsible men, we have at present no fears but that these drafts will be regularly paid when at maturity. Being domiciled here, and as the exchange is at present so much against England, we shall be pleased, if thou thinks it proper to present them for payment, and investing the amount thereof in timber, cotton, &c., which thou wilt find much more to thy advantage than by our remitting thee by bills on London.

"Touching the lad Fenton, about whom thou writest with so much interest, we have made the most diligent inquiry, but can learn nothing concerning him.

"If he was educated at any of our public schools, we think it not at all unlikely but that thou mayest obtain some information concerning him from a young man of the name of Henry Morton, as, from your description, he appears to be about the same age. This youth was two years in our employment, with much satisfaction to us, and credit to himself; and, being desirous to go to England, we had much pleasure in recommending him to our friends, Ransom, Robarts, Sloan, & Co., of Liverpool, with whom we have every reason to believe he still remains, and we remain, Respected Sirs, thine, &c., &c.

"DAVID HOLT, SAMUEL CLARE, & SONS."

On receipt of this letter I determined to visit Liverpool, and obtain from my young friend, Henry Morton, in person, any information that he could afford on this subject, concerning which I daily became more and more solicitous. In the mean time, I requested Alexander Sloan to superintend the repairing, improving, and beautifying the mansion and pleasure-grounds at Rockvale, which had fallen into sad dilapidation during the long occupancy of Mark Temple.

When I arrived in Liverpool, where I remained about ten days, I waited upon Messrs. Ransom & Co., whom, with Henry Morton, I saw frequently during that period on the subject of my visit, which proved most satisfactory; and, with the permission of his employers, Harry returned to the north with me, to join in the festivities of a gala which was to be given in honour of Miss Ellen Sloan's having attained her twenty-first year, and which, it was arranged, should be celebrated in a tent on the lawn in front of Rockvale House.

Nothing was left undone to give *éclat* to this event; a large bullock was roasted for the occasion, and between two and three hundred persons, including all the gentry for many miles round, the tenantry on the different estates of the late Mr. Temple, came to participate in this exhilarating festival; whilst all the workpeople, servants, herds, cottars, &c., were regaled in an adjoining tent, with my request that they should be made as joyous as possible on this happy occasion.

On taking my seat at the table, I placed the Beechwood

family, including Harry Morton, on my right, and my own family with their friends on my left. When Ellen Sloan appeared leaning on the arm of Harry, there was a general whisper of admiration over the whole assembly: in her person she combined dignity, modesty, and loveliness. She was attired in a simple plain white frock, without ornament, with a white lace bonnet and cloak, and she received all the many congratulations offered to her, with a suavity and grace that would have eclipsed many accustomed to mix in the highest ranks of society. Harry's love and engagement to her being now generally known, it was remarked by all what a noble and handsome couple they would make.

The banquet over, the table now groaned with fruit, wine, &c., and the bumper toast of the day was received with much joy, and followed by many cordial and heartfelt wishes of happiness to Miss Sloan from the young, and blessings from the old.

After the tumult had somewhat subsided, Alexander Sloan modestly returned his acknowledgments for the compliment that had been paid to his dear sister; "but," he continued, "I am intrusted by Mr. G—— with another toast, much more important even than the one we have just drank, and to which I feel quite inadequate to do that justice which it claims from all now before me. Therefore, with the permission of Mr. G——, I have to request that all the servants, herds, and dependants on the estates of Rockvale may be present when we drink it. Fill, then, a bumper, and let it be an overflowing one."

All were now on the tiptoe of expectation to know what was to follow this unusual preparation, when he again rose, and addressing the assemblage with a considerable appearance of agitation, he said—"Now, ladies and gentlemen, are your glasses filled?—and are all present, rich and poor?" and on this being responded to in the affirmative, he continued—"Then let us drink, with every demonstration of pleasure and heartfelt welcome, the health of the long lost heir to the Rockvale estates, our host, Henry Temple, Esq., with the sincere wishes from us all, that every happiness and prosperity may attend his future life."

The company were all taken by surprise. What could it mean? Where was Mr. Temple? But their suspense was not of long duration, as the extent of their astonishment

could scarcely be conceived, when young Harry Morton rose to acknowledge the toast, and to express his gratitude for the compliment paid him, whilst at the same time, he said, he doffed his mask, and appeared before them in his true character. Upon this declaration, there was a general burst of joyous acclamation; cheer succeeded cheer, with waving of hats and handkerchiefs; but at last, after some difficulty, obtained silence, when Mr. Temple, having recovered from the agitation which this affecting scene produced upon him, delivered a most touching and manly address—"He congratulated himself upon this opportunity, that had been so judiciously arranged by his kind friend and guardian, Mr. G——, for the purpose of introducing him to the tenantry on his estates, and to his friends and neighbours, with whom, he hoped, he should ever live on terms of happiness, and the interchange of social and innocent intercourse; and he would wish for no greater kindness to be conferred upon him as Henry Temple, the rich landlord, than he had received as the poor, friendless, and penniless boy, Harry Morton."

He entered into a detail of all he had passed through as far back as he could remember, since he was stolen by the miscreants now in prison, with whom he had that morning been confronted, and who had confessed their crimes. He told his friends how he had been deserted by Fenton and his wife when he was only four years of age; that they had adopted the name of Morton, which was that of the woman's first husband; and how he had been supported and educated by Mr. Paul, the Presbyterian clergyman resident at Montreal, who literally took him from the streets. Kind Mr. Paul had made every endeavour to find his parents without effect, and being himself convinced that he had been stolen in infancy, had never rested until he found himself in England, where he always flattered himself that he would learn what was his parentage; "but," he continued, "the conclusion of this romance in real life, and the consummation of his happiness was complete, when he found himself standing at last as he did, and had the felicity of returning his sincere thanks to the multitude of friends that now surrounded him, for their great kindness under circumstances so extraordinary, and in giving him such ample proofs of their attachment and hearty welcome."

The feelings of Ellen Sloan at this *éclaircissement* can be

more easily imagined than described. During Mr. Temple's speech she had never taken her eyes off him, and her countenance had undergone many a change of colour; when he finished they exchanged one glance of admiration and love, and a few tears of joy were seen to drop from Ellen's eyes.

It was a happy day, and we kept up the hilarity of the scene until a late hour. A dance was got up on the green, which the lads and lasses upheld with much spirit, to the inspiring strains of the village bagpiper; whilst the gentry within doors had their enjoyment until nightfall to music of a less boisterous description—bonfires, and a magnificent display of fireworks, concluded the proceedings of that eventful day.

That night, after having returned from accompanying Ellen Sloan to Beechwood, Henry Temple took possession of the mansion of his ancestors. I may now mention that, on my visit to Liverpool, all doubts as to the identity of Henry Temple were removed, from certain papers and documents in his possession, his minute description of Fenton and his wife, and many other incontrovertible facts. We arranged betwixt ourselves to keep the discovery for the present a profound secret, intrusting no one with it but Alexander Sloan, with whom we planned the *fête* which was to be held ostensibly for the occasion of Ellen's birthday; but virtually for the purpose of introducing Mr. Temple to his tenantry and the surrounding gentry.

A few months had elapsed when preparations were made for the marriage of Henry Temple and Ellen Sloan, which was a very gay one, and the ceremony was performed by Mr. Paul, with whom Henry had been in constant communication since his return to England, and who came from America at his request for this purpose. The festivities at Rockvale on this occasion were again repeated, after which the young couple started on a short tour to the continent.

At Mr. Temple's urgent entreaty, Mr. Paul took up his abode at Rockvale, and, on his return from his marriage tour, he made a handsome settlement on him for life.

In the course of two years, the aged clergyman of the parish in the gift of Henry died, which in gratitude he presented to Mr. Paul.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Temple have long continued to enjoy much happiness, possessing that esteem which they so much

merit throughout the country. The succession to the Rockvale estates is not likely, to all human appearance, to get out of the family, as they have now three fine boys, with whom I have many a romp.

Fenton and his wife, with Mark Temple, were tried and convicted on the clearest evidence of the robbery, and were all sentenced to fourteen years' transportation. Much trouble and interest being used, a remission of the sentence of the latter was obtained, and, after serving three years in the hulks, he was discharged.

He never dared to show his face again in the neighbourhood. An allowance is made by his nephew to keep him from absolute want, and he is now a wanderer and an outcast.

The Return from the Dead.

CHAPTER I.—THE OVERWHELMING BLOW.

THERE is nothing so much to be admired as truth, candour, and an artless disposition of mind in youth—such almost invariably inspire confidence, favour, and friendship; whilst he who begins life, breathing an atmosphere of falsity and presumptuous pretence, eager to appear what he is not, generally very soon finds his level; for there is a false modesty which is vanity, a false glory which is levity, a false grandeur which is meanness, a false virtue which is hypocrisy, and a false wisdom which is prudery; and the world is by no means tardy in its appreciating the characters of those who become enslaved in the indulgence of such follies.

The habits of the youths of the present time are much different to what they were in my young days. Then, our whole thoughts were of work and business during the entire day, which afforded such satisfaction to the mind as to give us a zest for our innocent pleasures and amusements in the evening; and, in the height of my business, although often turning over in a day thousands upon thousands of pounds, I was not ashamed to wear my little short white apron, or to draw on my fustian sleeves. *Now*, many of the young men's heads seem turned with fashion, folly, and frivolity, and then they after a time presume to fall in love (for men begin with love and end with ambition, so that there is no tranquillity till we die). This, I believe, with a few years' experience, cures them, when they see the necessity of settling to business; as the lives they lead in time become an annoyance rather than a pleasure—cloying like honey, loathsome in its own deliciousness.

Many, however, I have known who have fallen victims to habits of intemperance imbibed in youth, who I have unsuc-

cessfully endeavoured to reclaim, and who from step to step have sunk to the lowest pitch of degradation.

I then could often unite, in my expressions of sorrow, with the poet in their fullest force—

“ Truths would you teach to save a sinking land,
All shun, none listen, and few understand.”

The tale which I will now relate is the career of a youth—a surpassing model of prudence, courage, industry, and talent; and this combination of excellence I have never known to be exceeded or equalled in any instance, or to be compared with my friend, WILTON WEYMES.

Every man's moral character, whatever be his situation in life, is the citadel of his happiness; and the wretch that would treacherously charge the mine to overthrow it, is only a more cowardly and gratuitous assassin than the midnight robber, who murders him in his bed. Lurking beneath his disguise, it is a sacred duty to arm against him, and, discovered, to drive him from society as a morbid mass of contagion, whose atmosphere is death.

There was no young man, with whom we had business transactions, who stood higher in our estimation than Wilton Weymes. Never had a youth, beginning life, greater or more peculiarly trying and harrowing difficulties to contend with; under the most extraordinary circumstances, as it will appear, he conducted himself with a prudence, self-denial, and forbearance remarkable in so inexperienced a youth. In his every transaction with the bank, during the long period that he kept an account with us, he displayed at all times the greatest regularity. His discretion, assiduity to business, and his punctuality, which he carried almost to a foible, secured for him the confidence of every one with whom he had negotiations; whilst his private character (excepting during the period it was under a dense passing cloud) was most exemplary and irreproachable.

He had been for two years in our office for the purpose of attaining a knowledge of general business and accounts; and, from my observations during that time of his habits, manners, and abilities, I predicted what was afterwards fully realized, that he would be an ornament to the sphere in which he should move in after life.

Wilton Weymes was not nineteen, when, from the most

conflicting circumstances, he was compelled to enter upon the business of the world. It was at my suggestion that he did so ; and, as it afterwards happened, proved not only a wise, but a most fortunate step. He was an only son ; his mother had died when he was an infant, and he was trained, until ready for school, by his aunt, Lady Elizabeth Leslie, her sister, who inculcated in his young mind those high feelings of morality which guided him through life.

On his return from Eton, after the lapse of four years, where he had distinguished himself in the different branches of his education, he was placed with us, as a school preparatory to his succeeding to the extensive and lucrative business, which had been carried on from generation to generation, for nearly a century, by his father's family, as merchants.

Mr. Weymes, sen., at the period I now introduce him, was advanced in life, and had enjoyed a long and honourable career. He was reputed to be very rich, and from his noble and aristocratic bearing, arising from the pride of the high standing of his ancestry, which could boast in each succeeding generation of a mixture of noble blood, he was called proud, and regarded by many with feelings of envy and dislike, although one of the best of men. In consequence, his meaning was often perverted, and his motives and actions wilfully misconstrued. If he performed an act of charity, it was called ostentation ; and, except from those who really knew him intimately, and all the beautiful traits that adorned his character, he got little credit for the good actions, and the numberless deeds of benevolence, in the exercise of which he almost devoted his entire time whilst residing at his old family mansion in the country.

Mr. Weymes's personal appearance was much in keeping with his manners ; he was tall, erect, and stately. His usual dress was a blue coat, with fancy gilt buttons, light satin embroidered vest, with black silk breeches, and long stockings ; buckles, set with precious stones, both at the knees and on the shoes. He wore frills and ruffles at his hands and breast. His hair was profusely powdered and tied behind ; whilst he carried his gold-headed cane constantly over his shoulder, reminding one strongly of a Frenchman of the old *régime*.

Mr. Weymes's life had been one of uninterrupted prosperity ; he had never known a difficulty, nor had he ever heard that

the house, from its commencement, with all its enormous engagements, was ever in the slightest degree embarrassed. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at, when misfortune came upon him at his advanced period of life, that he became prostrated to the very earth, unnerved, and incapable of acting with decision. I one day observed, in the bank, that young Wilton looked very ill and disconsolate ; and on my inquiring of him, when the business was over, if he were well, he hesitatingly replied that *he* was, but that his father was very indisposed, and would esteem it a great kindness if I would drive out to the hall, and speak to him, as he was desirous of consulting me upon some matters of business. I did not hesitate to comply with this request ; and, on reaching the old hall, I found Mr. Weymes in a sad state of distress. He seemed very ill, and was scarcely able to tell me what had really happened ; but the particulars I received from the London managing-clerk, who had arrived the previous day, and who had been the bearer of the most calamitous despatches. He was surrounded with books and papers, and was engaged making up a statement of the affairs of the concern, which he had nearly finished.

I learned from him that the house had been obliged to stop payment in consequence of an accumulation of disasters. Their business had, for the last few years, been confined to the West Indies, where they had large coffee and sugar plantations, and from which shipments were made, to an enormous extent, to every quarter of Europe.

It had been the intention of Mr. Weymes to retire from the business for some time, previously arranging that his son should succeed him as head of the firm, consequently he had been realizing and concentrating his extensive property ; and it was his intention, as he was the sole capitalist (the other two partners, Messrs. Hagart and Sibbald, who had been formerly clerks, only sharing a limited proportion of the profits), to have condensed the business, and confined their future operations to the agencies of several extensive houses, which they had conducted for nearly forty years, in the colonies ; and to the periodical execution of a very remunerative government contract, which they had enjoyed for a great length of time, and to eschew for the future every speculation or adventure whatever.

Such arrangements were in progress, and nearly matured,

when the grievous and most unlooked-for intelligence reached them, of the failure, in the West Indies, of two of their oldest and principal correspondents (from the diminished value of their property, and all colonial produce, in consequence of the threatened emancipation of the slaves), with whom they were deeply and hopelessly involved, so as to be entirely disabled from meeting their engagements, just falling due; the more so as the produce of the cargoes of their expected arrivals would, from the depreciation of their value, fall far short of the amount once calculated upon, and, if realized by forced sales, would be most ruinous. There was therefore nothing for it but to fall back upon the private fortune and unemployed capital of Mr. Weymes (to liquidate the engagements of the house, which amounted to nearly £300,000); this was principally composed of property invested in the Three per Cent. consols, which, from 63 Mr. Weymes had purchased at, had fallen as low as 49; and to sell at that figure would have been equally destructive.

The beautiful estate of Weymes Hall was strictly entailed; but he had a large tract of valuable property in the adjacent county, which would sell to great advantage, and a considerable amount lent on the security of valuable mortgages. His extensive plantations in the West Indies were not taken into account, as the sale of them at the moment was almost an impossibility; indeed, their possession was attended with rather a loss than a gain to those who had had the misfortune to invest in such property.

All these particulars I learned on examining the state of the affairs of the firm, at the earnest request of Mr. Weymes, to which I devoted two days; and the result was that I found, with proper management and time being allowed to convert the different properties into cash, that every creditor of the house would be paid in full. As we were large creditors, Mr. Weymes entreated that I would take an active part, and would advise him under the circumstances what course was most prudent to adopt.

His downfall had not yet reached the ears of the public, and he seemed to have the greatest dread of that event. I recommended that no time should be lost in calling the creditors of the house together, to afford him an opportunity of explaining to them the state of their affairs; but this he said he could never have the nerve to do, and such a meet-

ing he never could face—his moral courage appeared to have entirely forsaken him. I, however, endeavoured to convince him of the necessity of making the effort, which thousands had done before him under far less favourable circumstances, he having such an honourable account to place before them. I could not have imagined it as possible that in such a short time a change so affecting could have taken place in a human being as had done in Mr. Weymes. He seemed to have shrivelled and sunk, both mentally and physically, into the most deplorable state of weakness, dejection, and incapacity; his former fine, tall, and erect figure was now bent almost double, and his characteristic cool manner, in the treatment of all matters of the greatest importance in business, seemed entirely to have left him. Young Wilton, betwixt whom and his father there had ever existed the greatest confidence and affection, tried every effort to rouse him up, but without effect; his spirit seemed to be quite broken, and his energies shackled for the time, which was increased when it reached his ears how little sympathy had been awarded to him by the public, when the misfortunes of the house became known. All his little weaknesses were now called forth in the most exaggerated form, and even his very good qualities were, in description, perverted by those who did not know him into crimes; and all who expressed themselves in such terms, and promulgated such reports, maintained that they had their information from most unquestionable authority. Pride, they said, must sooner or later have a fall, and it had most deservedly reached Mr. Weymes, with acts of dishonour which his name and family had never before known; all which reports, it was said, emanated from the most authentic source.

There is, perhaps, no virtue more congenial to the better feelings of our nature, none which the fluctuation of human affairs renders more necessary, none which has been more justly extolled, and nothing that will sooner afford relief to the downcast and broken spirit, than sympathy or tender feelings, and expressions of clemency shown to the unfortunate. How often have we seen an encouraging word uttered in kindness, with an affectionate and soothing look, rouse a man to exertion in the hour of difficulty, which temporary pecuniary assistance could not have effected?

Excepting from his son, and a very limited number of his associates in the higher walks of life, with whom he had been

on terms of close and confidential friendship, no compassion was exhibited for the sufferings of poor Mr. Weymes. *This*, conscious in his own mind of not having merited, he felt most bitterly.

A correct statement of the affairs of Weymes & Co., with the aid of Mr. Hagart, the junior partner, had been prepared by the accountant, from which it would appear that matters looked even better than had at first been supposed.

The day appointed for the meeting was at hand, and in the mean time Mr. Weymes had executed a trust-deed in favour of his friend Sir James G—— and myself, as trustees for the benefit of his creditors.

On the morning that the meeting was to take place, he did not appear at his usually early hour at breakfast, and, after some little time had been allowed to elapse, Wilton suggested the propriety of calling him, as the hour appointed for the business of the day might possibly have escaped his memory. On receiving no answer after knocking at his door, he entered, and, to his astonishment and alarm, discovered that his father was not in the room, nor did he appear to have been in bed during the night. On the toilet table he found the following short and ambiguous note, which, from the tremulous appearance of the writing, must have been indited under much mental excitement :—

“WEYMES HALL, *Tuesday, Midnight.*

“My beloved Son,—The disease from which I have suffered since my calamity has now reached its crisis. My brain is on fire—I can bear it no longer—I go to, I trust, a happier land. God bless you.—Your unfortunate father,

“W. W.”

I was immediately sent for, and when I reached the hall I found the family in a state (as might naturally be expected) of much distress ; every place was searched, but no signs could be discovered of Mr. Weymes. The plantations were explored, the ponds dragged, still no trace whatever could be got of him ; we could come, therefore, to no other conclusion than that poor Mr. Weymes, in a state of temporary derangement, had destroyed himself some distance from home, to ascertain which advertisements were inserted in almost every paper in the kingdom, without throwing any light upon the matter whatever.

The meeting of the creditors of Weymes & Co. was fully attended, and a private settlement was immediately arranged, on a payment being guaranteed at six months' date, which Sir James G—— and I undertook, at 15s. in the pound. The business of the house was also fixed on to be continued under the old firm, young Wilton Weymes taking the place of his late father, to whom was intrusted the collecting of the debts preparatory to the payment of the dividends, in conjunction with Mr. Hagart, who had for some years almost entirely conducted the business; and Mr. Sibbald, the other partner, it was arranged, should, as much as possible, keep it together until the old debts were paid.

I had come into very close contact with Hagart in making up at different times the accounts of the old concern. I found him a clever, keen, but subtle man of business; there were, however, one or two features that I discovered in his character that did not prepossess him in my favour—a low, mean, and fawning servility, which he never failed to practise to all above him; and a habit of traducing characters, by hints and indirect aspersions, which left little doubt on the minds of his hearers what was meant to be more broadly expressed. On one or two occasions he threw out certain innuendoes regarding my young friend Wilton, which gave me no little amount of uneasiness, as his hints were based upon facts of which I was aware, unconnected with his remote and unpalatable information which he left *me* to dovetail in, and a loophole for himself by which he might escape, which was his invariable practice when he saw it necessary.

Wilton, although he all at once became a slave to business, in his anxiety to settle the old claims of the house, was still constantly lamenting the great loss he had sustained; and his industry and intelligence was far from pleasing or satisfactory to Hagart, who had never liked him, he having proved a thorn in his path in many ways, more particularly from the circumstance of his having expected to have dropped into Mr. Weymes's shoes on his retiring, instead of our young friend. He, however, evinced no malevolence towards him; on the contrary, his subservience, abject obsequiousness, and pitiful servility, was most painful to Wilton, with whom he took every opportunity (knowing what was uppermost in the poor boy's thoughts) to deplore the loss of his much lamented father, and always to allude to his memory apparently with

the greatest reverence and veneration, and poor unsuspecting Wilton, never knowing with whom he was dealing, placed in him the most implicit confidence. "Never tell the devil too much of your mind."

Little was said, or even thought of poor Mr. Weymes's fall after the first nine days' wonder; if his name was ever mentioned, it was with disrespect, and a morbid feeling of gratification at his annihilation—*Sic transit gloria mundi!*

It is a subject unpleasing to contemplate, but how happens it that we are often more moved by fiction than reality; and that a tale of imaginary woe should excite more exquisite feeling, more real sympathy, than the severest reverses of fortune that could occur?

If Mr. Weymes had been an ideal personage, and the history of his life had been made the subject of romance or poetry, what mind so dull but would have moralized on the vicissitudes of human affairs—what heart so cold but would have felt some commiseration for the fallen man? But when all that a poet's fancy could have formed and blended of misfortune, to raise the interest of the reader, and when he, who at one time stood on such an elevation, is hurled headlong from his height to the abyss of humiliation, how happens it that the feelings of our natures do not take a more benevolent course—that the sources of sympathy are dried up; and compassion, which has always been considered amongst the most amiable of virtues, apparently in many cases loses its very essence and property, and falls to be numbered not only amongst our weaknesses, but catalogued amongst our crimes? From the prevalence of this disposition, too observable even amongst those classes in whom education and the intercourse of intelligent society would lead us to expect better things, it is difficult to account; unless, as in the case of Mr. Weymes, it be true in morals as in mechanics, that the motion may be continued when the impulse has ceased.

Wilton Weymes being now permanently settled in London, and feeling from his supposed deficiency in some portions of his education, he determined to improve himself by attending in the evenings the different classes, lectures, and institutions, for which so many facilities are afforded; and as an acknowledgment to his friends, of his consciousness of a want of certain necessary acquirements, would have been rather a delicate admission to his proud spirit, he determined

to inform no one in what manner he spent his evenings; however, his habits did not escape the wolf-eyed Hagart, as I will shortly shew.

Wilton, in the course of a few months, with the assistance of the previous instructions he had received at Eton, made himself a thorough master of the French and German languages, with mathematics, moral and natural philosophy, &c. ; but he still continued to attend the different lectures, and, from his proficiency, was admitted as a member in several of the learned institutions.

His employment in the counting-house during the day, and his devotion to his studies in the evenings, did not, however, prevent him from making a weekly visit to Grosvenor Square, at the mansion of the Marquis of L——, where he was always received as one of the family; and it required a very common observer, indeed, to remark that an attachment existed between him and Lady Jane B——, the eldest of the family. It was an old affair; they had been almost brought up in the country together, and, being much of the same age, were constant companions. They had been separated for many years, but when they again did meet the feeling betwixt them assumed a different character.

It was not much to be wondered at that a young lady, not yet having attained her twentieth year, of rather susceptible tendencies, should have fancied for a husband such a fine, intelligent, candid and open character, besides surpassing all others, in her opinion, in personal appearance and manners, as Wilton had turned out; nor was it very astonishing that he should have become deeply enamoured of the little romp of his infancy, who now possessed all the perfections and accomplishments of a truly beautiful girl. I believe I was the first to express my suspicions on this subject to the marchioness, which were not long of being confirmed, as their constant intercourse shortly ripened into an irremediable and devoted love and affection, with all its hopes and fears. Wilton Weymes had always been a great favourite with the marchioness, whose amiability of character and kindness of heart we have been already informed, from the time of our first introduction to them as Captain and Mrs. Fitzmorris. She had known Wilton from his infancy, and no one could have felt more than she did at the time he was deprived of his mother, and left in charge of Lady Elizabeth Leslie. As an

accepted suitor, he therefore became a constant visitor at Grosvenor Square, and devoted more and more of his time to business and the improvement of his mind ; in the former, from the assiduity of Hagart the outstanding debts were being rapidly collected, and he took it for granted that the amounts as received were immediately remitted to me, for the purpose of meeting the dividends to the creditors, which were nearly falling due. I had not heard from Wilton for some time, at which I wondered, as he had talked of making several improvements at the Hall before he left, to carry out which the accumulating rents were to be applied until he came of age. By letters I received from Sir James G——, my co-trustee, he mentioned that he could not understand Wilton, or how he spent his time, as he never could get him to visit him, and was sorry to say that he had lately heard remarks whispered which were not by any means creditable to him. I was much annoyed at this communication, and feared that some hidden foe was at work in the wish to effect his ruin—a snake in the grass, waiting the opportunity to pounce upon him.

I had my suspicions, and determined to keep my own counsel, and *watch*.

Hagart had, necessarily, frequent occasion to see Sir James G—— on the business of the trust ; and, from his fawning manner, had ingratiated himself into his good opinion. Indeed, he thought that he had seldom met with a person in whom such perfect reliance could be placed, and he therefore had the less hesitation in inquiring of him one day, if he could enlighten him how Mr. Wilton Weymes occupied his time ? if he were constant in his application to business, and how and where he spent his evenings ? Hagart appeared to be taken by surprise at these questions ; and with a seeming diffidence, and sinister look, hoped that Sir James would not press him for information on this subject, that he was sure would give him as much pain to learn, as it would do him to communicate.

This remark, of course, induced Sir James to urge him the more ; and at last, after much circumlocution, he insidiously threw out observations from which no other conclusion could be inferred, and which most artfully implied, although not in direct terms, that Mr. Weymes never reached his lodgings until after midnight, and that his time was spent in obscene

company, and at the gaming-table ; besides, he gave him to understand that he had interfered very much with his exertions in the realizing of the debts of the company, and even insinuated that he was in the regular habit of misapplying the funds to a serious amount, to meet the discreditable claims that were constantly being made upon him.

Hypocrisy is the homage that vice pays to virtue ; and Hagart managed so artfully, that he rose more and more in the estimation, and ingratiated himself into the most perfect confidence of Wilton, by his acquiescing manner and fawning tongue.

CHAPTER II.—THE SHAMELESS HYPOCRITE.

I NEVER, in the course of business, detected a man guilty of flagrant falsehood that I ever more could trust, or place reliance in a word he uttered, but always endeavoured to shun him as much as possible. Dr. Johnson has said that the frequent lack of truth that we meet with in the world, arises from a want of the knowledge of its importance, and the thoughtlessness of not, from political and selfish motives, strictly adhering to it, more than any actual intention of being deliberately guilty of the sin.

As the wind is not more variable than a liar, and as the most artful cunning and deceit are his constant companions, there is no barometer by which his words can be weighed.

Of all the vices inherent in our nature, there is not one that assumes so many shades as falsehood ; rising in the scale from the most innoxious slip and utter harmlessness, to the most accursed wickedness, and the vilest and truly contemptible iniquity ; but every gradation, from the commencement, is less or more reprehensible.

The person who, to add interest to a tale for the amusement of his listeners, or who writes a book, embellishes and dresses it up in a form, and in such a manner, as that often the real facts can scarcely be recognized, is harmless, and his motives good. Under this category may be classed all writers of fiction, from Milton and Shakspeare, downwards.

There are others who have imbibed the habit, by which

they expect to add to their importance, by what is termed "drawing a long bow." They boast of their intimacy with great men ; dining with my Lord This, or receiving favours from my Lady That. This man is, by his own estimate, extremely clever—great in literature—wonderful in prowess—and unlimited in patronage. He is, however, very harmless, and his habit is generally practised by a weak mind. It injures no one but him who has the misfortune to be enslaved by it, as he is very soon seen through, and regarded by his fellow-men with ridicule and contempt.

Next in its order comes he who deals in the marvellous ; this individual will not allow facts, however vivid in their nature, to remain alone, but will constantly be making use of the multiplication-table, reminding one of old George Coleman's story of "The Three Black Crows."

The lives lost at a fire, an inundation, an accident on a railway, &c., he is sure to quadruple : his mode of expressing himself is also peculiar, using such words as monstrous, tremendous, audacious, atrocious, &c., which are seldom from his lips ; and a young lady's fortune—the produce or profits of a friend's business—the extent of a landed estate that a youth has unexpectedly succeeded to—are all described in the same ratio by the man of marvel ; he, however, is generally very good-natured, and does harm to no one, excepting also to himself, as he is soon understood, and his descriptions measured accordingly, *always* being weighed in the balance and found wanting.

Then we have the blustering bully, the braggadocio, who is by no means over scrupulous as to the nature or extent of *his* assertions. He is of the Major Longbow school, and with the most brazen countenance, and almost an incredible boldness, will stare you full in the face at the moment he is telling you the most arrant lies of the wonders he has accomplished ; he does not, however, injure any one either, nor is he ill-natured. When found out, from some very gross misrepresentation, and charged with it, if he cannot, by some ingenuity and fresh lie, get out of the scrape, he turns on his heel without feeling much affront, and, not at all daunted, soon tries it on again. Falstaff was a sensualist, a swaggerer, and a liar ; but there was no malignity in his character.

The pettifogging attorneys of the lowest class, "the money-gulping vermin of the law," who are generally found touting

about the inferior courts, we shall pass over ; they are *avowed* liars—'tis their calling—and their habits are too gross and devilish even for comment.

Another crying iniquity in falsehood and fraud, is practised to a fearful extent by the second or third class London tradesmen ; there is not a shop you can enter of this description, in many of the principal thoroughfares, in which the vilest deceit is not exercised. What an education for youth ? The lad in these establishments who can tell the most manifest lies, is looked upon as the most promising apprentice.

There are many like Ananias and Sapphira, who, totally selfish, and devoid of the vestige of principle, manage to crawl ignobly through the world, and escape punishment somehow in this life, who neither stick at a false oath, nor, to gain a selfish end, hesitate to sacrifice by the most accomplished deceit, and fraudulent pretences, the honest and industrious trader, with whom they have been in daily and friendly intercourse ; and these characters, although a curse and pest to society, and whose hearts would seem to be formed of granite, bad and malignant though they are, fall far short, and have not reached the perfection in guilt of the deep, dark, and fiendish SLANDERER—the monster who spurts out poison more venomous than the rattlesnake, and gluts over the ruin he has accomplished of his innocent and unsuspecting victim (who never injured him) ; I mean those cowardly Iagos and Varneys (though rarely to be met with in real life). These are the demons in human form—these are the devil's pets ; and of this precious tribe Hagart was a worthy member.

One day Sir James G—— was busily engaged in his office in America Square, city, where he also resided, when the servant announced the Marquis of L——. They had met several times before, and, after exchanging the usual courtesies, he observed—"I have called upon you, Sir James, for a piece of information which I am sure you will candidly give me."

"Your lordship may rest satisfied," he replied, "that I will do so with pleasure, if consistent with reason and my honour."

"You are one of the guardians, I understand, in connection with my particular and highly valued friend, Mr. G——, of young Wilton Weymes."

"I am, my lord," replied Sir James.

"For cogent family reasons," said Lord L——, "I am desirous to ascertain from you what you know of this youth's habits; and I may at once tell you, that my visit here has been incited (although I do not much regard such communications) by an anonymous letter which I have received on the subject."

"You have placed me in rather a delicate position," said Sir James; "for, however desirous I may be, my lord, to afford you the information you require, I am debarred in honour from disclosing certain confidential information I have from time to time received regarding Mr. Weymes, certainly not in his favour; and I can only speak from my own experience of him, which is, that as I am not aware that he has any duties that claim his evening's attention, it has been a matter of much regret that, in the face of repeated invitations, he has never done my family the honour of a visit."

"You astonish and distress me," returned Lord L——, "to learn this, and I am sure it will give equal vexation to the marchioness (when I make the communication to her), with whom he has ever been a great favourite."

On the following Sunday, when Wilton made his usual visit at Grosvenor Square, he, to his astonishment, met with a much different reception to what he had been accustomed. His invariably kind friend, the marchioness, tendered him but a cold hand when he entered the drawing-room, instead of both hands as was her wont; and all the young ladies, excepting Lady Jane, seemed reserved and formal, a sad contrast to their former habits, when they used to flock around him with affection whenever he made his appearance.

Wilton was quite at a loss to imagine what this extraordinary change of manner could mean. There was a silence for a minute or two, which was broken (with an appearance of embarrassment and perplexity that could not be concealed) by the marchioness, who inquired "if he had seen the marquis?"

He replied, with extreme misery now depicted in his countenance, "that he had not."

Lady Jane, whose face expressed the deepest distress, and whose heart appeared like to burst, from the united passions of anguish, sympathy, and love, threw her arms around his neck, burst into tears, and exclaimed—"No, no! dear, dear-

est Will! you have been traduced—you are innocent, I will answer for it with my life!"

Some one, I forget who, has said that "man loves the sex, and woman the individual," and I fear there is something in it.

Wilton was now more and more confounded, and was attempting to proceed to an *eclaircissement*, when the door opened, and bustling in from his barracks came our old friend, Captain Lord B——.

"Hullo!" he cried, "what's the matter—what's up? You all look as glum as a parcel of Quakers of the feminine gender on a fast-day, or at a christening. Is the parrot dead? Has mamma turned Methodist, or what? One of you speak, for heaven's sake!"

"Mr. Weymes," observed the marchioness with dignity, "will perhaps enlighten you a little on the subject."

"What in the name of wonder is it all about, Will?" again inquired Lord B——; "come, tell me. Has Frisky's pup not opened its eyes yet, that you all appear so distressed?"

"Indeed, Charlie," said Wilton, "I can explain nothing. I have not the most distant conception how or by what means I should have been so unfortunate as to cause any change in that regard which your dear mother has always evinced towards me, and which has ever been my boast and my pride."

"Well, well, never mind!" said Lord B——, "I cannot help it; but this atmosphere is not for me, so good-bye to you all—I'm off! I hope to find you in better humour when I return," and he hurried from the room.

He had not, however, been gone two minutes when he returned, crying out—"Wilton, the governor wishes to have some conversation with you in the library!" at the same time confidentially whispering in his ear the consolatory remarks—"There is clearly some devilment in the wind—you'll catch it!"

Lord L—— had difficulty in restraining his feelings when Wilton made his appearance. He felt as if inclined at once to take him by the hand, as he was assured from his manly and innocuous, at same time respectful and melancholy expression, that the offences with which he was about to charge him were unjust and iniquitous.

"Pray, be seated," said Lord L——; "I wish to have a little conversation with you on a subject that has given me considerable uneasiness, both on your own account—in whom, you are aware, I have had always an interest—and in my solicitude for the future happiness of Lady Jane. I have invariably found you candid and truthful, and in that spirit I hope you will give me certain explanations, and faithfully reply to one or two questions which I shall put to you."

"Nothing, my lord," returned Wilton, "that I can say or do, would, I imagine, be enough to regain your lordship's confidence, which I by some unaccountable means seem to have lost."

"Then, pray have the kindness to inform me," said Lord L——, "how long you have occupied your present apartments, which you have informed us are in Curzon Street."

"Ever since I came to town," replied Wilton.

"When do you generally return from the city?"

"Why, often very early—I have such confidence in Mr. Hagart, our managing partner, whom I leave generally to finish the correspondence, and wind up the business of the day. I at present seldom come in contact with Mr. Sibbald, our junior partner, but *will* soon, as we are now about closing satisfactorily the business of the unfortunate old concern, and are making arrangements again to revive with vigour the respectable connections of the house."

"I am compelled to put rather delicate questions to you," said Lord L——; "and perhaps, therefore, you will not object to inform me about what amount of cash you have drawn since you came to town out of the concern."

"I have never interfered with the funds of the company in any way whatever as yet, my lord."

"What! have you never had any pecuniary benefit from the house?"

"Not to the value of one shilling, my lord."

"That is very extraordinary; then how have you lived?" continued Lord L——.

"By periodical remittances from Mr. G——," he replied, "taken from the rental of my estate."

"Do you visit much?" inquired Lord L——.

"Indeed, my lord, I am much to blame in that respect; I have eschewed, during the winter, all company and amusements whatever, but have frequently reproached myself par-

ticularly for my want of courtesy to Sir James G——, who, you are aware, is one of my guardians ; and, although he has frequently invited me, I have never visited."

"Then, to come to the point which I wish to attain, will you inform me how and where you spend your evenings?"

At this question Wilton blushed deeply, but in a few moments, having recovered himself, he replied with a firm voice :—"I *will*, my lord. In my desire to make myself more worthy of becoming a member of your family, I have been endeavouring to improve my mind, and have devoted every hour that I had to spare in the study of those branches of philosophy, the languages, and the arts and sciences in which I imagined myself deficient ; and the different professors and lecturers whom I have attended, have complimented me on the progress I have made ; and, as a proof of which, this honorary diploma was last night (undeservedly, certainly) unexpectedly presented to me."

"I am quite satisfied and delighted with this explanation, Wilton," said Lord L——, "and must now, on my part, give you my reasons for requiring this interview. Do you know this writing?" he said, handing me the anonymous letter he had received.

"Not in the least," replied Wilton, "it is evidently disguised ; may I peruse it, my lord? Why," he exclaimed, on glancing at its contents, "this is most wicked!" and, after making a strong effort to control his feelings, tears at last burst from his eyes. "I never was in a tavern or gaming-house in my life ; I never, directly or indirectly, interfered with the funds of the company, Mr. Hagart, with my trifling assistance, having solely managed that department of the business ; as for dissipation, excepting in the indulgence of a cigar and cup of coffee on my return—often late at night—I cannot charge myself with any other excess or debauch."

"That will do," said Lord L——; "I am now completely satisfied that some vile wretch, from a vindictive feeling, has, in the most cowardly manner, been trying to effect your ruin, and we must endeavour to find out and punish the miscreant, if possible. Have you no suspicion?"

"Not the most distant," replied Wilton ; "but I am sure Mr. Hagart will assist us in tracing out the dastardly coward."

"We will talk of this hereafter," returned Lord L——.

"In the mean time let us join the ladies, who are no doubt solicitous to know the result of our interview;" and upon this, Lord L——, taking Wilton by the hand, led him into the drawing-room.

"All right—whitewashed, I see!" whispered Lord B—— in his ear as he passed; "congratulate you, old fellow."

"Permit me," said Lord L—— to the marchioness, "to restore to your good graces our young friend, who has proved himself, from the conversation I have had with him, to be more worthy of our esteem than ever he was."

The countenance of the marchioness was immediately lit up. She now warmly pressed both his hands and gave him one of her kindest looks, which entirely obliterated the remembrance of his former reception from her. The other young ladies affectionately expressed their happiness; whilst Lady Jane (again in tears) exclaimed, that she was sure it would prove just as she had anticipated and maintained.

On the following morning, on going to the city, Wilton informed Hagart of the misery and distress he had been caused to suffer in consequence of the poison that had been infused for a time into the minds of the Marquis of L—— and his family, and entreated his assistance in endeavouring to discover the scoundrel who could have been guilty of such an act of wickedness, if in the power of man to do so. Wilton observed—"With all my ingenuity, I cannot imagine from what source such crawling lies could have emanated, or who could have so cruelly and gratuitously injured me."

Hagart appeared shocked beyond measure at the communication, and said he could not find expressions strong enough to evince the extent of his indignation at the perpetrator of such a crime, and would never rest until he had discovered the guilty wretch.

Wilton further observed—"I cannot imagine who could possibly have attempted to injure me in this most vital manner, as I am known intimately to no one excepting those with whom I am connected in business."

"Ahem!" murmured Hagart after a pause; "'tis a most extraordinary world this! There are some people that, let you live for years with them, you can never get to understand. Do not imagine, however, that I *particularly* allude to any person in *our* establishment. He would," he said, "make no further remarks on the subject, only that he

would for the future keep his eyes open, and by every means endeavour to detect the guilty one, and, if possible, prevent him from doing further mischief."

Wilton felt most grateful for this fresh proof of Mr. Hagart's disinterested friendship, and from the hint he had given him, he was much inclined to think it possible that Mr. Sibbald might be his enemy.

I had now occasion to be in constant correspondence with Wilton. Lord L—— had written me the particulars of the attempt that had been made by some miscreant to injure him, and also how much pleased he had been with the elucidation of the plot that had been given; and I confirmed the fact of the remittances I had made him, and remarked that I had often wondered that his necessities required him to draw on me for so little. He had for many months sent me large sums to be placed to his account, but still continued never to increase his expenditure.

On balancing our books at Christmas, I found a most formidable amount to his credit, which induced me delicately to inquire of him from what source it came. His ingenuous reply to me was most gratifying and satisfactory.

The marriage of the young people being fixed to take place when Wilton attained his majority, that period had now nearly arrived, and preparations were being made for the joyous event. It was arranged that, in a year or two after his marriage, he was to relinquish the active management of the business to his partners; and to retire, reside on, and superintend the improvements and other affairs connected with his large estate.

At this period, one of those periodical epochs in mercantile affairs, which are as destructive to legitimate business as they are invariably disastrous in their results, became the rage. Scheming and Joint-Stock Companies of every description, based upon the grossest folly, knavery, and fraud, introduced into the field of commerce adventurers of the worst character, who, by their specious manners and consummate effrontery, managed to deceive and drag as parties into their wild and unstable projects, men who, had they not been previously inoculated to a certain extent in the fever, would have spurned from them with indignation the individuals who attempted to make such mad proposals—hazards and speculations at variance with all the steady

and plodding habits of the honest trader, and in almost every instance an outrage on common-sense. The fever of excitement, however, was so high, that they could or would not allow themselves to stare this crying evil full in the face; and were led on, step by step, until they were dragged into this stream of iniquity.

Dr. Johnson said, about ninety years back, speaking of the degeneracy of the aristocracy, "That they had gone into the city to look for a fortune."

During the existence of this mania, when men were almost beside themselves, and whilst gold was scattered like chaff before the wind, to organize and support these fictitious and fraudulent contrivances, to entrap the credulous and unwary, a host of painted hornets made their appearance in the city, fluttering, like, as it might be, in swarms over a pot of honey. These were scions of noble families from the extreme western regions of the metropolis—young lordlings and honourables, who, having finished the dissipations of the season, and being reduced to poverty and discredit, were attracted to the "filthy east," in the hopes of coming in for a share of the loaves and fishes—young scamps whose time had been divided for nine months betwixt the fives court, the tavern, and the gaming-table, the positive swell mob of the aristocracy. They lent their illustrious (?) names as directors, first upon a *consideration*, to enhance in appearance the importance of a prospectus; and when they had secured their share of the plunder of the schemes, and when the bubble had burst, they chuckled at the myriads of victims whose ruin they had been instrumental in effecting, backed out scatheless, having, in their own vernacular, "fobbed" sufficient for them to carry on another season's campaign.

Every day, immediately upon Wilton's leaving the office, a *posse* of these individuals were wont to call upon Hagart, with all of whom he appeared on the most intimate footing; and Mr. Sibbald could not avoid listening to conversations very unlike what he had been accustomed to hear, in conducting the staid and respectable character of the business of Weymes & Co. He remonstrated one day with him on the subject, mentioning that he was sure that neither Mr. Weymes nor his trustees would approve of such customers, or trafficking in the office.

Hagart, in reply, told him to mind his own concerns, and not to trouble *him* with any of his impertinent observations. Sibbald, however, had heard enough to rouse his suspicions, and he determined to be a close, silent, and cautious observer of his every movement.

CHAPTER III.—VIRTUE REWARDED.

In the "Morning Post" of the — March, 18—, there appeared the following announcement:—

"Married, at St. George's Church, Hanover Square, by the Right Rev. Dean of C—, Wilton Leslie Weymes, Esq., of Weymes Hall, —shire, N. B., to Lady Jane Charlotte Augusta B—, eldest daughter of the most noble the Marquis of L—. The happy couple, after having partaken of a splendid *déjeuner* at the mansion of the lady's father, in Grosvenor Square, took their departure for the Marquis's seat, in North Wales, where it is their intention to spend the honeymoon."

Wilton, in making his business arrangements before his marriage, left the principal management to Hagart; and, until his return, Mr. Sibbald was to take his place in the pecuniary department in his absence, when he found many disbursements and discrepancies that required explanation. On looking into his private cash, he found several large sums placed to the debit of Mr. Weymes's account; and, upon inquiring of Hagart for an explanation, he produced a book in which every week's transactions had been vouched and initialled by him. Mr. Sibbald made no further remarks on the subject at the time.

Hagart, during Mr. Weymes's absence, took a very high position in the office. He made an immense number of changes in the business from the old wonted routine, which he called improvements. The coast being comparatively clear, he had now an opportunity of trafficking *ad libitum* with his noble friends of the Stock Exchange and the Share Market; and a week or two had scarcely elapsed ere his manner became quite overbearing. Sibbald had the greatest difficulty in keeping him in check, and in preventing him from using the name of the house to facilitate his own private

transactions. He made it appear to his friends as if he were the sole prop and stay of the establishment. Sibbald allowed him unlimited power in his boasting and blustering, but, from being constantly in the office, and looking more narrowly into the general business than he lately had done, he took very good care that Hagart did not exceed the power intrusted to him. His vulgar and uncourteous manner, and the disposition he evinced at all times to tyrannize over the subordinates, made him most unpopular with them ; and, although one would have inferred from his general manner that he held his superiors in the greatest respect, still, in his heart, he had a jealousy of wealth, hatred at rank, and a malignity at all superiority. The rich, to suit his purposes, he adored, and the poor he despised. He was never known to lend a helping hand to a friend in need ; his motto was, "He that's down, down with him !" His supercilious and arbitrary manner continued to increase, and would have been insufferable, if Mr. Sibbald had not kept him under control.

"Man, vain man,
Dress'd in a little brief authority,
Most ignorant of what he's most assured,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As make e'en the angels weep."

After an absence of about two months, the young couple returned to London, and took up their abode in a quiet, but elegant and tasteful, little establishment in May Fair.

The composition on the estate of Weymes & Co. had been long since paid off ; the property of Mr. Weymes, senior, had realized much more than had been expected, and a considerable balance of its proceeds remained in my hands. Wilton was now more attentive to business than ever, and took a much greater management in its details than he had hitherto done. In checking Mr. Sibbald's cash transactions with him during his absence, his attention was drawn by that gentleman to several discrepancies that required some explanation from Mr. Hagart, and he in consequence appointed a day with him, when they should go through their affairs together. In the interval I received a letter from Wilton, marked *private* and *confidential*, requesting that I would immediately come up to town, of which I saw the necessity in consequence of certain information he gave me.

When I arrived in London in the morning, I found Mr. Sibbald waiting for me at my hotel by appointment, with a number of books and papers, and in the examination of them we were engaged the whole day, after which I was so much impressed with the necessity of despatch and determination, that I immediately (accompanied by Mr. Sibbald and his clerk) waited upon the magistrate at Bow Street, and we did not part until midnight.

On the following morning I was early at America Square. Sir James was of course surprised to see me; but I soon gave him to understand the object of my visit.

"When did you see our young friend and late ward, Mr. Weymes, Sir James?" I inquired.

"Why, only a few days ago," he replied, "when he called upon us with his young wife. I hope his marriage will steady him, and that he will now find more happiness in the society of innocence and virtue, than he has done for the last twelve months in that of dissipated associates, gamblers, and blacklegs."

"You are severe, Sir James! Mr. Weymes never was given to the habits you mention, I hope; but, if so, I fondly trust that he has entirely cast them off."

"I am not so sure about that," replied Sir James, "as his pecuniary necessities will prove; it was only within this week that he sent to me for a loan of fifty pounds, I suppose to pay some urgent debt of not a very creditable description."

"Indeed! do you hold any document from him for this advance?"

"Oh yes!" he replied; "he sent me his draft at a month's date for it."

"Will you kindly favour me with a sight of it?" I said.

"Most certainly," returned Sir James, and he handed me the document.

"Will you intrust this voucher with me for a day or two, Sir James—after which I shall return it to you with thanks?"

"Most assuredly!" he replied.

"Now, Sir James," I continued, "as my co-trustee on the affairs of Mr. Weymes, I wish to have a little *more* serious conversation with you. I have been truly sorry to find that, during his minority, we have been rather remiss in our attentions to his interests, as I have learned from the most indis-

putable authority, that he has not only been systematically and fraudulently plundered of large sums received from his father's different properties, but that his noble character has been falsely and deceitfully aspersed by the machinations of an arch liar and an unmitigated villain."

"Who is the person you suspect?" inquired Sir James in surprise.

"There is no suspecting about the matter; the culprit is George Hagart, one of the partners of the house."

"No, no!" said Sir James, much excited; "'tis impossible! Mr. Hagart is a most excellent gentleman, and perfectly incapable of the crimes you would attribute to him. I cannot—I *never will* believe it! I had a visit from him only yesterday."

"You have been grossly imposed upon, Sir James, by him, as many others have been. There is not a shade of doubt as to his guilt."

"But if so, what is to be done?" eagerly inquired Sir James; "we must lose no time to recover the property, or part of it, if possible."

"I was quite of the same opinion with you last night, so I took the precaution of having him arrested by a Bow Street warrant, and he is now safely lodged in Newgate, his papers and repositories sealed up, and an officer left in charge."

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Sir James; "how I must have been deceived! and is Mr. Weymes aware of all this?"

"He has been for some days convinced of his roguery, but does not yet know the prompt measures I have considered it necessary to adopt. I expect him to call at my hotel in about an hour, when I shall feel obliged if you can accompany us, and ascertain what property this miscreant has in his possession."

The disclosures made on the examination of Hagart's repositories showed at once the extent of his villany, which appeared to have been spread over several years; the correspondence which was found went far to implicate several of his aristocratic friends in his transactions, and to make them amenable by law to the severest punishment.

When they were apprised of Hagart's apprehension, and the discoveries that had been made, to prevent exposure and more serious consequences, they were too thankful to disgorge all *their* plunder. It would appear that Hagart had made

them the tools for his artful designs, and had managed them with all the dexterity with which an adept shuffles a pack of cards. It was evident that he had premeditated leaving the country, as, amongst his other securities that were found, were a large amount of scrip for stock in foreign funds. After having secured all the property that could be found at his house, we proceeded to Newgate.

Hagart received us with the most consummate assurance and *sang-froid*; he told us that, being a partner in the house, he had a right to do with the funds as he thought proper; that his arrest was illegal, and that a breach of the laws had been perpetrated in his person, for which he would hold us all liable.

I calmly informed him that the bravado he had assumed was not his best policy, and that his most prudent course would be to succumb, and at once yield up all his peculations.

"I never *will*!" he exclaimed; "you can fix no crime upon me, and I defy you."

"If there is any technical difficulty in the way of establishing *this* crime of atrocious robbery," I remarked, "against you, there can be no doubt as to your conviction, on one of an even more formidable character—I mean forgery. This I believe, is your handwriting," (showing him the spurious draft for £50 on Sir James G——.) At this disclosure Hagart now turned deadly pale, muttering to himself—

"So, with all my subtlety, caught at last."

It was once said by some one, of a man who, in exculpation for some infamous and mercenary proceeding, that he observed as an excuse that "He must live," upon which somebody else remarked, "I do not see the necessity."

I could have made the same reply to Hagart, when he began in like manner, now altogether unnerved from apprehension; and, like all cowards, in tears in the endeavour to extenuate his crimes.

I told him that it was far from our wish, although in our power, to make him expiate for all his wickedness on the scaffold; but that he must, ere we could liberate him, yield up all the ill-gotten property he possessed; and if it was discovered that he withheld the value of a fraction, that he should be instantly arraigned for forgery. This was complied with as far as we could learn to its full extent, after which,

on undergoing a confinement of ten days, we set him at liberty, although I knew "that save a thief from the gallows and he will be the first to cut your throat."

Hagart became an outcast, shunned and abhorred—in return for being kept aloof from society *despised it*. Patriotism or religion are always the last refuges of a scoundrel—he took to the latter; and may now be seen generally every Sunday, dressed in a rusty black coat with a dingy white neckcloth, preaching the gospel and total abstinence on a piece of waste ground near Somerstown. "He that is low need fear no fall."

Three years had elapsed after the foregoing events, when the old Weymes Hall became again occupied. Many improvements and additions had been made to it—the grounds had been greatly beautified, and the clearing away of several clumps of old timber had opened up the vista of the park and the distant landscape, which rendered the *coup-d'œil* of the prospect most charming, besides large additions and alterations had been made to the house, as attached to the old tower, which had formerly been the family mansion, was built a splendid new suite of rooms.

Mr. Weymes had virtually retired from business. He now, as I will afterwards show, was entitled and fully justified in doing so—he retained his pecuniary interest in the concern, which was left to be conducted by Mr. Sibbald and Mr. Ord, the latter of whom had been for many years the managing clerk. The house had been originally established by one of Mr. Weymes's ancestors, who from extravagance became embarrassed, and was obliged to resort to trade for the purpose of retrieving his broken fortunes, and it was now Wilton's lot once more to withdraw the family name from business.

When Mr. Wilton Weymes and Lady Jane, therefore, took possession of what was now to be their permanent residence, they could not sufficiently commend my taste from what I had caused to be done for their comfort and happiness. Lady Jane was much improved, both in person and manners, since I last saw her, and so was my friend Wilton. A beautiful boy (another little Charlie) had been the fruit of their marriage. I never in my life saw a more loving pair; they seemed entirely devoted to each other, and a more handsome couple could scarcely have been met with. Besides, their

amiability of disposition, and accessible manners, rendered them much and deservedly beloved by all their acquaintances. Lady Jane possessed the peculiarity of, in a marvellously short time, securing not only the affection but the admiration of all to whom she was first introduced, and exhibited the finest lesson of virtue that can be imagined; for she showed how triumphant was her power of pleasing. She was most accomplished in all the more elegant branches of education. Within the first month of her residence at the hall, she had her sketch-book filled with the most striking points of the beautiful landscape around them; but her *chef-d'œuvre* was her proficiency in music. I have often thought it almost profanation, and have sat with pain listening, and even with disgust, at public concerts, to the performances of a male harpist. It is essentially a lady's instrument, and I maintain that *no* man can produce from the harp that pathos, or draw from it that thrilling and ecstatic touch, which the fingers of an accomplished female of delicacy and taste can do. I never met with a more striking instance of this than in Lady Jane—the zeal that love alone can give to afford pleasure to a devoted husband, had urged her to perfect herself in the acquirement of a number of the most charming of our Scotch melodies, which she sung and played with unadulterated feeling, and with that ease and unaffectedness of conscious ability which stamps the proficient.

Mr. Weymes now found sufficient employment during the day, in superintending the different works going on on his estate, and Lady Jane frequently accompanied him, mounted on her palfrey, visiting and chatting with the cottagers as she passed along the road, and relieving those who stood in need of assistance, whilst expressions of attachment, and often repartee, passed betwixt this happy pair. On one of these occasions, when Lady Jane was indulging in some affectionate remarks on this tender subject, Wilton replied:—"Yes, dearest, that may be very true, but don't be offended when I tell you that you remind me of the punning epigram, in which the lady kisses her husband, and tells him, with *his* hearty acquiescence, 'that she dearly loves her own sweet Will.'"

CHAPTER IV.—THE HAUNTED CHAMBER.

FROM a rumour that had gone abroad in the country, Mr. Weymes and Lady Jane had the greatest difficulty in making up their staff of domestics ; and such was the superstition of that class of persons, that when they did come few would remain more than a week or two, and only that after much argument and persuasion.

It was currently reported that the old tower was haunted ! Certainly, strange, unearthly, and unaccountable sounds had been heard, and a new housemaid, in dusting in the state-room of the tower, was found one evening at twilight lying in a swoon in the corridor leading from the apartment, broom in hand, and her pail upset. She could or would give no account of what had been the cause of her fainting ; all that she ever could be got to say was—"Gude forbid that any freend o' mine should ever see the sicht that I hae seen !"

What she therefore *did* see never transpired. None of the servants could now be prevailed on to enter the tower apartments excepting the old housekeeper and butler, and they seemed engaged in some constant employment in them that required all their time and attention.

Junius said, "That when once a man is determined to believe, the very absurdity of the doctrine confirms him in his faith."

The story of the haunted tower spread far and near. A most *horrific* tradition was rife in the servants' hall, of an old housekeeper dame, "once upon a time," having been found stiff dead in the state-chamber ; and such had been the terror of something she had seen, that it had caused her heart to spring into her mouth, and which *was found sticking between her teeth* ! This much dreaded apartment had certainly in its appearance nothing to mollify the character it had acquired, nor to do away in any respect with the impression that prevailed, of its unhallowed reputation. It had originally been a public hall of some sort, was of an octagon form, panelled with oak black with age, interspersed with armorial bearings, and around the chamber were hung a number of grim old family portraits of knights in armour, with sundry dames attired as shepherdesses, &c. ; and from its

walls were also suspended several coats-of-mail, with javelins, antique sabres, arquebuses, &c. The fireplace was of an immense size, and formed of massive jet black marble; it was said that in troubled times this chamber had been the refuge and protection of many a royalist, and that even royalty itself had on one occasion the advantage of its secrecy and security.

One day, when this frightful report was at its height, Mr. and Lady Jane Weymes had been entertaining a party of gentlemen at dinner, amongst whom was our old friend, Captain M'Cabe with his dog Dido, still his constant companion in all his visitings. A fearful storm arose, and continued to rage so violently, that it was arranged that four of the party, who resided at a distance, should remain for the night, one of whom was Captain M'Cabe; but when the hour for rest came, the housekeeper announced that the bed-chambers being nearly unfurnished, and in comparative confusion, all could not be accommodated unless one of them slept in what was foolishly called the "haunted chamber." The Dean of C——, who happened to be one of the party, said, as far as he was concerned, that he had no objection to occupy the room for the night, were it only to prove the absurdity of the belief that prevailed amongst the servants and lower classes. "Voltaire has written," he remarked, "that you read every where of prodigies, alleged facts that carry absurdity and falsehood in their face—do not believe a word of them, *I* do not believe ocular witnesses when they tell me of things repugnant to common-sense."

"I perfectly agree with Mons. Voltaire," said Captain M'Cabe, "and, if Lady Jane has no objection, *I* will sleep in this much dreaded chamber on one condition, that you allow me, before going to rest, to have a little private conversation with the butler."

"But are you not afraid, captain," said Lady Jane, "in the face of all these fearful reports, to run the risk of being frightened to death?"

"Pooh, pooh, nonsense!" he replied, "my dear Lady Jane, I that have had twenty musket muzzles pointed at my devoted head, and only waiting for the word 'fire' if I did not deliver up my sword and become a prisoner. No—no! it is not such silly stuff as ghosts, spirits, and apparitions, that can appal Duncan M'Cabe."

The butler was therefore called, and he and the captain retired together; his business with him was soon settled. M'Cabe requested of him the favour of being provided with a good fire; a kettle of hot water,—a bottle of brandy, with pipes and tobacco. Being left alone with all these preparations and appendages, he began to make himself as comfortable as circumstances would admit, and, within about an hour, had disposed of three glasses of hot brandy and water, and smoked sundry pipes, when he must have felt a little muddled, as he heard sounds, he said, such as could not have proceeded from any thing earthly, at which Dido commenced a suppressed and murmuring growl. I will not, however, anticipate, but leave the captain to speak for himself as to what he saw and heard in the "haunted chamber," when he made his appearance on the following morning.

All had assembled in the breakfast-room except M'Cabe, and after waiting some little time for him, and his not appearing, the servant was desired to call him, and on knocking at the door and receiving no answer, he entered, and found the captain in a profound sleep: the chamber was all in confusion, filthy with tobacco ashes, and the brandy almost finished; finding difficulty in awaking him, he gave him a sharp shake, when he started up in bed, and frantically exclaimed—"Avaunt, stand off, hideous monster! vanish, abscond, thou execrable vampire!"

"I am afraid, Captain," said the servant, "that you must have had a troublesome dream."

"I suppose I must," he replied in exhaustion, after rubbing his eyes. "Pray, where am I?"

"At Weymes Hall," said the servant; "and the family are now waiting breakfast for you, sir."

"Yes, yes! I now remember all," said the Captain. "I shall be down immediately."

When he made his appearance he looked serious, haggard, and jaded, and from his having paid but a hurried attention to his toilet, it added to his cadaverous aspect.

"Good-morning, Captain!" said Lady Jane. "I hope you have had a good night's sleep?"

"I am sorry to say I have *not*, my lady," he replied. "When Duncan M'Cabe again visits Weymes Hall, he will certainly request to be put into any other apartment than the one he occupied last night."

"Why, what has happened to you?" continued Lady Jane. "I hope you have not imbibed any of those absurd ideas that are prevalent in the servants' hall."

"And I thought," said the Dean, "that you were proof against any such superstitious folly, which may have its influence on the minds of the vulgar and illiterate, but certainly not on the intelligent and educated."

"I cannot imagine," said the Hon. Mr. Alfred Wentworth (a young gentleman who was on a visit at the Hall), "what the compass of its natural existence and the appearance of a spectre can be, as without flesh or blood, bone or muscle, one would suppose that it could not have much chance with an able-bodied man like the captain, if challenged by him to single combat; but I rather think the force of imagination must have a considerable share in the conjuring up, and the creation of an apparition, and our friend may possibly be subject to sudden attacks of somnolent aberration, particularly in this instance, from having had the impression beforehand that a phantom was to be his visitor in the course of the night."

"You mount guard in that chamber for one night, and then inform us in the morning whether or not *you* have had uninterrupted natural rest. Whatever may be remarked," said the Captain, "I affirm that I have seen this dreaded vision, and no living man has ever dared to question my word with impunity."

"Well," said the Dean, apprehensive of M'Cabe's waxing choleric in the discussion, "be so kind as to pass the toast, and perhaps you will favour us with an insight into the mysteries of this haunted chamber."

"I certainly will," returned M'Cabe, sipping his coffee, "as on public grounds I consider it my duty to do so;" and he thus proceeded—

"When I was preparing for bed," he said, "after having had the least possible sprinkle or two of brandy and water, my attention was called by Dido to a most extraordinary sound which seemed to rise from the ground and pervade the whole room; it resembled nothing I had ever heard before, and, although eminently strange, it excited in me no feeling of alarm; but after some little time, in the course of which I must have slumbered in my chair, I awoke and found the sound had ceased. To settle my nerves I took another (the

smallest drain imaginable) glass of brandy and water, and tumbled into bed. I could not have been asleep more than half an hour, when I was suddenly awoke by a sharp bark from Dido, who was as usual couched at my feet. I suddenly started up, when I beheld, monstrous to relate! fully and plainly developed before me, the figure of an aged man; his face was of the most deadly hue, his hair was snow-white, his figure tall and erect; he was attired in a long dark robe, and in his hand he carried an antique chamber lamp; he seemed transfixed to the spot on which he stood, and appeared to be surrounded by a halo of blue light."

"What did you then do?" inquired the Dean.

"I sung out—'Hullo! In God's name, who are you?' and in a moment all was darkness, and the vision melted away, apparently sinking into the ground, creating a sound as it did so, equal to, and resembling the report of, a pistol."

"Why, this does look like something beyond a joke," said Mr. Wentworth; "pray, what did you do next, captain?"

"Why, I immediately got out of bed and lighted my candle, and made a search about the room, but could see no indications of any thing unusual; and, feeling that I required a little of something to compose me after such a visitation, I smoked a pipe, and mixed myself another tiny spark of brandy and water; and after sitting some time, endeavouring to collect myself, I suddenly became overpowered with sleep, and tumbled again into bed."

"When, I suppose," said the Dean, "you met with no further disturbance, and were afterwards permitted to enjoy your sleep."

"Not exactly," replied the captain; "as an hour might have elapsed when I was again awoke by *another* visiter. The candle had nearly burned down to the socket, the last embers of the fire had disappeared, and all was silent as the grave, when the picture of that worthy and very gentlemanly-looking man in armour, whom the butler called Sir Reginald de Weemis, stepped politely down from the canvass, and, in the most civil and courteous manner possible, proffered me his gauntleted hand—an honour which I most respectfully declined."

At this part of the narrative, Wilton and all joined in a most hearty laugh.

"And did you remark nothing in the morning," inquired

the Dean, "to afford any trace of the disturbers of your night's rest?"

"No other signs," replied the captain, "excepting a con-founded smell of brimstone."

The report of M'Cabe's experience of this much-dreaded chamber was not long in reaching the servants' hall, and creating amongst them an increased feeling of alarm; and this was not by any means diminished from the circumstance of Mr. Cairns, the steward, having added his testimony to the odious rumour that was now bruited far and near. He had been storm-stayed at the hall one night, having been engaged in business all day with Mr. Weymes, and having no misgivings or apprehensions whatever, at his own request took possession of this dreaded room for the night; and the account that he gave in the morning of what *he* witnessed was certainly more distinct, and left an impression on his hearers so confirmatory of all that had been reported, that it was decided that something was at least necessary to be done to explain away, if possible, these appearances—the truth of which was now corroborated and strengthened by this additional attestation.

Mr. Cairns said that he had not well gone to bed when he heard a most unusual sound, which he could compare to nothing he ever had heard before. In a short time that ceased, and he was again roused up by the noise of the clanking of a chain and a glimmering light in the room, which proceeded from a small chamber lamp in the hand of an old man with pure white hair. His expression was that of deep reflection and sorrow—his countenance was pale and wan—he was dressed in a long dark loose garment, fixed with large tassels in front, and he wore a cap of the same material. He dragged after him a chain until he reached the toilet table, when he (Mr. Cairns) made a movement in bed, and the next moment all was darkness. He did not again feel disposed to sleep for an hour or two, but at last dropped off, meeting nothing more to distract his attention or disturb his repose.

About this period, business of importance called me to the Hall; where, to finish it satisfactorily, I was compelled to remain for a few days. During my residence, I occupied this notorious chamber—a pandemonium for which I had neither fears nor apprehension; on the contrary, it afforded

me much pleasure to do so, and it was a matter of congratulation to me that the reports concerning it existed. But the servants, in consequence of my voice having been heard in conversations every midnight after I had retired, concluded that I must either be a man of indubitable courage, or actually in league with his satanic majesty.

Wilton, on the morning I was preparing to leave, came into the dining-room, evidently much annoyed. The servants had now risen *en masse*, and informed him that they could not remain longer in a house which appeared to be under the dominion of the devil, and begged of me to advise him as to what means he should use to convince them of their error, and to stop the clamour.

I requested him to order them all up, and I would try what I could do to appease, and to exhibit to them the absurdity of, their fears, in its proper light.

When they all made their appearance, I calmly observed to them, that I was sorry to learn from Mr. Weymes that they had thrown up their good places, in consequence of silly fears and apprehensions, arising from vague and idle reports; but I trusted that they would think better of it. Kate, one of the housemaids, who appeared to have been elected spokeswoman, replied, that they had all made up their minds, and that nothing would induce them to remain.

"Well," I said, "I think you are wrong, as here am I, who have slept in what has been called the 'haunted chamber' for four nights; and I assure you, upon my honour, that if spirits, such as you imagine, were allowed to visit the earth, which never can be, and is contrary to all hypotheses and common-sense, that in this instance nothing of the kind exists at Weymes Hall.

"I am not prepared at present, but in ten days from this date, satisfactory proofs will be afforded you, from which you will be enabled to judge for yourselves how very unfounded have been your fears, and ridiculous your conduct, throughout the prevalence of this most absurd story; therefore, my advice to you is, to return to your different avocations, and wait the result for the period I have named, when I faithfully engage and pledge myself to fulfil the promise I have made to you."

This address had the desired effect. The footman maintained that he never had given the least credit to the rumour;

and Martha, the dairymaid, observed that, though certainly several of the cows had ceased to give milk for some days, which she could by no manner of means account for, yet she never attributed that circumstance to the influence of any hobgoblin—not she! So peace was restored; and they all retired, so far satisfied, to their work.

Acting under the instructions of Mr. Weymes, I on the subsequent morning after leaving the hall, issued the following circular:—

“LONDON, 13th May, 18—.

“SIR,—You are requested to attend a meeting of the creditors of Messrs. Weymes & Co., at the London Tavern, on Tuesday the 23rd instant, at two o’clock p.m., and to bring with you a state of the balance of your debt, beyond the settlement and discharge, under the trust-deed executed on the 8th November, 18—, with interest to this date.—I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,” &c.

When cash is engaged to be paid by appointment, at a particular time and place, the virtue of punctuality abounds, and absenteeism seldom occurs! There was a full and satisfactory meeting at the London Tavern. I had been engaged for nearly an hour with two clerks examining the different claims, and drawing cheques for the amounts, as I found them correct, when the door of the room opened, and Mr. Wilton Weymes entered with his father (to the amazement of all present except myself) leaning upon his arm.

His appearance was much the same as when last seen in the height of his prosperity; he seemed in the most perfect health, with all that fine aristocratic bearing for which he had ever been distinguished. All rose to their feet as they entered; and the company, not knowing what conclusion to arrive at, a total silence for some minutes prevailed, which was broken by Mr. Weymes, sen., congratulating all those present and himself, at their meeting in health.

“It will be my pleasing duty,” he said, “to explain to you the apparent mystery of my having risen from the grave, or from the bottom of the sea; suffice it in the mean time to say, that if I have made a visit to another hemisphere, it has been in *your* service, but I will take the opportunity of gratifying that curiosity, which I know you cannot fail but to have,

at dinner, when I shall be proud to see all those who feel disposed to honour me with their company. In the meantime, if you please, we will proceed to the business of the principal object of my convening you together to-day, which is the settlement by cash of every honourable claim that may be against me."

After a sumptuous dinner, at which all were present, old Mr. Weymes, according to his promise, proceeded to elucidate the facts, accounting for his mysterious re-appearance; and his manner of doing so was such as not only to charm all present, but to cause him to be regarded with the highest feelings of reverence and respect.

It was said of the great Duke of Marlborough, that such was the fascination of his manners, that he could refuse a favour with more grace than another man could grant one, and dismiss the disappointed scarcely less satisfied than the successful suitor. Of this school was Mr. Weymes, senior. He said—"I will not detain you, gentlemen, more than a few minutes with my little narrative, and my chief hope in its recital is, that it may in some measure efface that unfavourable impression from your minds, which was formed of me at the time I left England, subdued and prostrated by the most disastrous and unexpected misfortunes, and the machinations of a villain in whom I had ever placed the most implicit confidence. From all present, I believe, I received that sympathy which is the greatest and only solace to a fallen man; and I have ascertained that those who had the least regard for their own characters, and whose moral conduct could least stand the test of scrutiny, and who were bound to regard me with every feeling of gratitude and respect, have been the most strenuous in the reprobation of my hitherto unsullied name. The first duty, the foundation of every other moral excellence, is self-respect, and which can only be preserved by fair and honourable dealing, and consistency of conduct: it is, I assure you, by this virtuous and dignified path I feel confident that I have travelled through life, and by which I have now nearly reached the end of my journey.

"My losses in trade you, ere this, must be aware did not arise from extravagance or speculation. If I have been occasionally prodigal in my expenditure, it has been in that cause which ought to be the duty of every man who has it in his power, and who has not lost the best feelings of human nature;

I mean that which prompts him to pity the sufferings and alleviate the wants and afflictions of the poor and wretched. Deserving objects of this description too often present themselves before us, and it is a matter of regret that those who possess the power and means do not more contribute to their own happiness by the indulgence of this virtue. I shall never forget, gentlemen, the sufferings I endured on that eventful night, when I left Weymes Hall; intense anxiety had impaired my health and weakened my mind, and a feeling (call it false pride if you will) had driven me nearly to a state of distraction. I had a vague idea that my fortunes could still be retrieved by the sale of my large estates in Demerara, Jamaica, and St. Lucia, and without any defined plans I started for these colonies. When I arrived in Liverpool, I found a ship clearing out for Jamaica, in which I secured my passage, but before sailing addressed a letter to my son, which it appears somehow never reached him. Dispirited and disheartened, on my arrival in the West Indies I might have sunk in despair, had I not been encouraged and supported by the kindness of friends whom I had previously known personally, and with whom our house had been in correspondence for a long term of years. I communicated to them my desire to dispose of my estates, in the furtherance of which I received from them every assistance; the termination of the war, and the consequent sudden change in political affairs in Europe, enhanced the value of West India property beyond all expectation, and I was consequently, in a year or two, enabled to dispose of my estates one after the other to the greatest advantage, remitting the amounts to my son, who deposited them for *your* behoof in the hands of Mr. G——, and it is most gratifying to me to be enabled to inform you that the amounts I have received for these properties, after liquidating all your claims, leaves a sum which enables me to withdraw my son from business, and take that position in society which his birth, education, and the connection he has formed entitles him to.

"I returned to England," continued Mr. Weymes, "about six months ago, and have been living in great seclusion at my country seat until all my business matters were settled, no one being cognizant of the fact excepting my son, his wife, Mr. G——, and two old domestics."

If Mr. Weymes had been previously censured and reviled,

he was now extolled to the skies for all that was noble, generous, and good ; speeches were made, and flattering testimonials were heaped upon him, and Weymes Hall was for several weeks the scene of a succession of festivities and rejoicings with the surrounding gentry, congratulatory of his return ; and the expressions of joy by his tenantry and dependants, at again seeing him alive and well, occupying once more the seat of his ancestors, was unrestrained and affectionate.

Ere this time it must doubtless have been concluded, and correctly, that the terrific phantom of the haunted chamber was no other than old Mr. Weymes himself. Previous to his return, he wrote to Wilton that he intended to remain in retirement and seclusion in the country until all his affairs were arranged, and requested that the suite of rooms which had not been used for years might be made habitable to receive him. There were four apartments communicating one with the other, the approach to which was by the back, which had been the original front of the hall ; and the access to the "haunted chamber" was by a secret sliding panel in the wainscot, known only to the members of the family.

This room Mr. Weymes senior had always made the depository of his papers, &c., and he generally occupied it during the day on his return, attended by the butler and housekeeper, old servants of the family. In one of the adjoining rooms there was a turning-lathe, in the exercise of which he gained both health and amusement ; he had muffled the wheels so as partially to deaden the noise, and prevent its being heard in the adjacent rooms, and this was the "unearthly sound" that first excited M'Cabe's alarm.

Mr. Weymes had on neither of the two occasions been told that the room was to be occupied, and, as he never went to rest until the morning had pretty far advanced, he used to amuse himself at his turning-lathe. On the night M'Cabe occupied the room, he had wandered into it unconscious of his presence, for the purpose of finding some tools he required ; and when Mr. Cairns slept in the apartment, Mr. Weymes had broken the chain of his lathe, and came to repair it ; the noise equal to the report of a pistol proceeded from the secret panel, being hurriedly closed. The visit from the portrait of Sir Reginald de Wiemis, the blue light, and confounded smell of brimstone, &c., may be fairly and rationally attributed to :

"the smallest additional nip of brandy and water," of which M'Cabe partook before going to sleep. My nocturnal conversations, as may be concluded, were with Mr. Weymes, senior, with whom I had much very important business to transact; the panic of the chamber-maid who was found in the swoon, arose from his being ignorant that she was in the room, opening the panel and suddenly shutting it without her seeing him.

Mr. Weymes in the course of time became very frail and infirm, but his life was an example of contentment; his sweet little grand-children were his greatest solace; he used to say that "they assisted to smooth his pathway downwards." I latterly became his almost constant visitor when the indications of a break-up in his constitution became more and more apparent; still he continued cheerful. On one occasion when I called, he observed, "I must not at *my* age expect to enjoy uninterrupted health. The machine *will* wear out, and the grand consummation *will* come at last. I have hitherto been much favoured in health in the face of the bustling life I have led, and the excitement that I have been exposed to; still I endeavour to keep a good heart, for what's to be gained by indulging in gloom, or allowing the affairs of the world to disturb us? Almost the last era of my life has already elapsed—why, then, should I perplex myself for the remainder? A few years at the utmost will annihilate that wealth and power, in the pursuit and acquisition of which I have been obliged to stoop to many meannesses, and been subjected to endless mortifications and affronts. The best of all things (if such there be in the world) is tranquillity, freedom from want, and remoteness from dependence.

'A little rule, a little sway,
Is all the great and mighty have
Between the cradle and the grave.'

"Death never happens but once, yet we feel it every moment of our lives; it is far worse to apprehend than to suffer; still, each man thinks all men mortal but himself. Life is a sorry affair, after all—man looks forward with smiles, but backward with sighs; many persons dread taking a retrospect of their past lives, and reflect on the desolation and rugged rocks from which they themselves have escaped destruction. I cannot say that *I* much experience this feeling, as there are many sweet and dreamy atoms of the

transient past in my early life—gleams of radiant light, which still sparkle in my remembrance, and upon which my thoughts could dwell for hours together. The practice of contentment, under all circumstances, is doubtless our best and wisest policy. To give way (as I once did) to despondency when affliction or misfortune assails us, subverts the energies, is enfeebling and unprofitable, and an evidence of defective judgment—our happiness is in our own hands. No mistake is greater than to suppose that our enjoyments depend upon extraordinary and difficult positions; we can make ourselves very happy for hours by simply watching happy people."

The remnant of the life of old Mr. Weymes was spent in deeds of philanthropy and peace; and at an advanced age he passed from this weary pilgrimage of trouble and woe, to realms of joy and bliss. His end was serene and placid, and his memory will be ever revered as the consistent and steady friend of the poor, and the never-failing comforter to the afflicted or unfortunate.

"Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet, and blossom in the dust."

Mr. Wilton Weymes, at his father's death, succeeded to a large amount of property in bank stock, &c., with which he extended his landed estate. Having a seat in parliament, a great portion of his time is spent in London, where Lady Jane, now the mother of three lovely boys, is much and deservedly esteemed, not only by her own friends and family, but by that large circle of nobility and gentry who visit at Grosvenor Square. The Marquis of L——, now an important member of the cabinet, devotes his entire time to public business. Lord B—— also represents his native county in parliament.

Wilton Weymes is looked upon as one of the most promising young statesmen of the day. When he addresses the House he is always listened to with the greatest attention and respect; and it is predicted that the time is not far distant when he will be selected, and prove to be an intelligent and efficient member of the government.

Bank Robbery.

CHAPTER I.—THE CONVICTION.

My adventure, in which I became for a time the associate of the most notorious thieves and murderers (for what I know), is worthy of record ; it arose from the occasion of the bank's robbery, and an event that I look back upon with fear and trembling, when I reflect on the fool-hardiness of the proceeding, and the consequences that might have been the result from my placing myself in such peril.

It was about six o'clock on a cold, ungenial morning in the month of November, that I was roused from my bed by the arrival of a messenger from town, with the unpleasant intelligence that the bank had been robbed during the night. I lost no time in dressing, and hurried to the spot as fast as horses could carry me. On arriving, I found that a crowd had assembled in front of the bank (early in the morning though it was), and within were two or three officers, &c., examining the premises in the endeavour to discover in what manner the robbery had been effected ; but no trace of the least appearance of violence whatever could be seen.

The iron safe which contained the cash was always trebly locked after the business of the day, and was fixed in a small fire-proof chamber lined with stone, with an iron door, also doubly locked ; besides, the accountant's clerk slept in an apartment adjoining the safe-room, with fire-arms ready charged, and at all times within his reach, in case of necessity ; but as yet, with all our examination, the whole affair seemed wrapped in mystery.

The property stolen was principally composed of our own notes, with a number of bills and acceptances discounted for our customers, and very soon falling due. The strictest investigation took place, but all remained still shrouded in

darkness. I knew the young man who slept in the room next to the safe to be strictly honest ; but he could give no information whatever, excepting that, on rising in the morning, he found a small portion of the window of his chamber open, in which state he had *not* left it on the previous night.

We therefore came to the conclusion that the robbery had been committed by means of false keys, but how obtained remained to be explained.

I immediately wrote to the authorities at Bow Street, giving a full account of the robbery, and a list of the stolen property, which we found was to a large amount, with a request to the magistrate that he would send down, without loss of time, one of their most active and efficient officers to investigate, and, if possible, find some clue that might lead to the discovery of the thieves. I was therefore much pleased when, in a few days, Townsend, the famous official, made his appearance ; and with whom I had a long interview, informing him of our habits, our hours of closing, &c., after which I told him that the keys were always left in charge of Mr. Todd, the accountant's clerk, in whom I have every confidence. Upon which he said—

“I must immediately interrogate this Mr. Todd.”

I remarked, “That he would obtain little information from him beyond what I had given him.”

“I am not so sure of that,” he replied. “Oblige me by calling him in, and have the goodness to allow me to question him without interruption.”

When he appeared, Townsend commenced by putting the following interrogatories to him :—

“‘Pray inform me, Mr. Todd, how long you have been employed in the service of the bank?’”

“‘Nearly four years, sir,’ he replied.

“‘It has been your duty, I believe, to see that the safe-room, and the doors and windows, are locked every evening after business hours ; and all the keys, excepting those of the safe, left in your charge?’”

“‘Yes, sir,’

“‘Now, tell me—as I perceive that the door of the safe-room opens from your apartment—do you regularly see that all is fast before going to bed?’”

“‘Always, sir.’”

"Well, then, pray inform me at what hour did you retire to rest on the night of the robbery?"

"It was rather earlier than usual, sir," he replied. "I had had a long walk with young Mr. Vaughan; and, on my return, felt so tired and exhausted that I was glad to get to bed."

"Exactly so," remarked Townsend. "Now, tell me who is this Mr. Vaughan?"

I here interrupted him by assuring him that he was a very respectable young man, residing with his brother, Captain Vaughan, who had done considerable business with us in connection with London, and occupies a large tract of shooting ground, which he has taken for the season from one of my friends in the neighbourhood.

Townsend evinced considerable impatience at my interference, and observed, "Mr. G——, with every respect, I shall feel much obliged if you will not again interrupt me until I have finished questioning Mr. Todd;" and, on my promising that I would not make any further remarks, he proceeded again with his examination.

"Now, Mr. Todd," he said, "you mentioned that you had a long walk with young Mr. Vaughan on the night of the robbery; pray, had you any refreshment when you were with him? Now, be very particular."

"Yes, sir," he replied; "we had tea in the village about four miles off."

"Had you any thing else to drink during the evening?"

"Yes, sir, we had some ale on reaching town."

"Pray, how much may you have had?" inquired Townsend.

"I think about two bottles."

"Now, Mr. Todd, will you inform me if this Mr. Vaughan has ever visited you of an evening at the bank?"

"Yes, sir; once or twice, but he always left me early."

"Have you ever had a call from him during the day?"

"Yes, sir, in two or three instances he has called, and waited in my room for me until the business was over, that I might accompany him in our walk."

"How long have you known Mr. Vaughan?"

"Only about three months, sir."

"Have you any other friends or acquaintances who have been in the habit of calling upon you at the bank?"

"None whatever."

"When did you first discover the robbery?"

"The bank-porter first called my attention to the window when he came to awake me in the morning, and I also saw footmarks, which excited my alarm; upon which I immediately sent for the accountant, who brought the keys of the safe, and we then discovered what had happened."

"Did you sleep very soundly that night, Mr. Todd?" inquired Townsend.

"Particularly so; and the porter had much difficulty in waking me in the morning."

"Thank you, Mr. Todd," said Townsend; "you may now go."

He had no sooner left the room, than Townsend, with a slap on his thigh, exclaimed—

"I see my way as plain as a pikestaff!"

"What is your impression from your conversation with Mr. Todd?" I inquired.

"Why, that the lad has been drugged by this youth, Vaughan, and the bank robbed by him and his accomplices, whilst Todd was under the influence of some powerful opiate; and that impressions in plaster have been obtained of the locks of the safe, from which false keys have been made."

"Impossible!" I said; "this Captain Vaughan is a highly respectable man, and his brother an artless boy."

"Pray, then, what *do* you know of him? Who is this Captain Vaughan, whom you have so often mentioned with so much respect? Is he an old acquaintance?"

"Not at all," I replied; "he has only been in the neighbourhood, off and on, for six months, and he came as a stranger."

"Without any introductions?" inquired Townsend.

"None that I am aware of," I replied; "his very gentlemanly manners and appearance were a sufficient passport into the very limited circle of society in which he has moved, and which he did not seem disposed to extend or cultivate; besides, he has been always very punctual in settling with his tradespeople, and, from what I can learn, has been regular and retired in his general habits."

"Of course I am not known here?" remarked Townsend.

"Certainly not," I replied; "unless young Todd may have some suspicions, no one else can possibly dream who you are."

"In that case," he said, "I must see this Captain Vaughan."

"For what purpose, pray, may I ask?"

"Leave that at present to me; and, as no time is to be lost, and you tell me he is eight miles off, what conveyance can I get to carry me to his place?"

In reply to him, I remarked that I should be pleased to pay a visit to Captain Vaughan, which I had long intended to do, in which case I should be glad to accompany and drive him up in my own carriage. Whilst on our way, Townsend made the remark that if Captain Vaughan was the man he took him for, he had by this time *mizzled*; and on my informing him that I did not exactly understand the expression, he returned—"My idea is, that he has made the best use of his time, and fled." I replied, that I did not think that was at all likely.

"We shall see," he said, with a peculiarly knowing look; and assuredly his predictions were confirmed, as, on our reaching the cottage, we found no one in occupation of it but an old servant man, who informed us that Captain Vaughan had left four nights previous, but where he had gone to he could give us no information.

"Has he paid his rent?" inquired Townsend.

"Yes, sir," the man replied, "and all his bills, very honourably."

"In what description of cash did he pay them, do you know?"

"In bank-notes, sir," he replied; "I have got the money for his quarter's rent, which he charged me on leaving to give to no one but to Mr. Blair, the landlord, and I have sealed the parcel up containing them."

"I wish particularly to see those notes," said Townsend.

"I cannot, I am sorry, sir, oblige you in that respect, as I must not break open the parcel; the money was given to me in charge, and no one has any right with it except Mr. Blair."

"But I have urgent reasons for wishing to examine those notes, and you will oblige me by granting my request immediately."

"I cannot do so, sir," he replied respectfully, "to you or any one but Mr. Blair himself."

Townsend now assumed a different strain, and in a sten-

torian voice, and with a look of stern determination, he exclaimed—"I must see those notes, sir, to further the ends of public justice. I am Townsend, the Bow Street officer (showing his silver baton), and I command you in the king's name, at your peril, instantly to produce those notes for my inspection."

The poor old man, in the greatest alarm and tribulation, was now too glad to comply with his request; the notes were brought, and I found that the numbers corresponded with a portion of the stolen property.

Townsend again sealed them with the royal arms, and requested that, to facilitate the proceedings of the law, the seal should not be broken, nor should the notes be parted with by Mr. Blair on any account, as otherwise he might subject himself to a heavy penalty. "*They are stolen property,*" he said; and, having delivered himself of this charge, now proposed that we should return. When we reached the town, we found, on inquiry, that two persons who did not seem connected had picked up the mail-coach in passing four nights previously; the one appeared to be a land surveyor, from his having the usual measuring apparatus with him; the other was a youth attired as a midshipman.

"How far were they booked to?" asked Townsend.

"All the way through to London," replied the clerk of the office.

"These are our men," said Townsend, aside to me; "I must lose no time in following them," and he left that night, engaging to communicate with our London solicitors immediately on his arrival, who would advise us as to how he progressed.

In about two weeks I received a letter from them, informing me that they had had a visit from Townsend, who had given them to understand that he thought he had now got a trace of the robbers of the bank, and requested my immediate presence in town.

When I reached London, I learned that Townsend had been anxiously awaiting my arrival, and our solicitors had appointed him to meet me on the following morning. When he made his appearance, after having satisfied me as to several particulars, he mentioned that he had a coach at the door, and proposed that I should accompany him a little way into the country.

We had got a considerable distance out the Hampstead Road, and had turned about a hundred yards down a narrow rural lane, when he, suddenly pulling down the window of the carriage, called on the coachman to stop at a gate, and remarked—"Here we are ; this, I think, is the crib."

It was a very genteel-looking detached cottage, with a garden tastefully laid out in front, enclosed within an iron railing, on the door of which was a large brass plate, with the name DOCTOR FORTESQUE engraved thereon. The bell, on being rung, was answered by a smartly dressed servant-boy in livery ; he informed us that his master was at home, upon which Townsend hurriedly sprang out of the carriage, and I more leisurely followed him. The house was very tastefully furnished, and, when we were shown into the parlour, we found a genteel and fashionable-looking young man, rather delicate in appearance, seated at breakfast. On the table was coffee, the remains of a cold fowl, a decanter of Madeira, a box of cigars, &c. He was attired in a brocaded silk, light-blue dressing-gown, a Turkish cap, and red morocco slippers, and, as we entered, laid down the morning paper, which he apparently had been reading. In the hurry of the moment I did not at first recognise my quondam friend, Captain Vaughan, who, the instant he cast eyes upon the officer, exclaimed—"Hulloa, Townsend, what's up now ?"

Townsend very slowly and coolly replied—"I want you this time about some Scotch bank-notes."

"What in the name of wonder," he said, "have I to do in this affair ? I know nothing of them."

"Come, come," said Townsend, "no palaver ! Sir Richard, who is now sitting, sends his most respectful compliments, and requests the favour of a visit from you this morning most particularly ; so stick a pin in your nose, and look sharp, as I have no time to spare."

"Mr. G——," he said, addressing himself to me, "I am sure *you* do not imagine that I could be guilty of robbing the bank ?"

"How do you happen to know that the bank has *been* plundered ?" said Townsend ; "but come along, change your toggery, and let's be off."

"Well, since you will have it so," said Vaughan, "pray, assist yourself to some wine whilst I alter my dress up-stairs, and I will return to you immediately."

Townsend helped himself to a couple of bumpers ; and, as Vaughan was leaving the room, he said—"Not so fast, my ancient friend. Permit me to act as your *valet de chambre* upon this occasion ; I am like a fond parient, I cannot bear that you should be out of my sight for a moment."

They soon returned—Vaughan having changed his dress, and apparently much agitated ; which, on remarking, I could not resist feeling distressed, convinced, although I now was, that he was the perpetrator of the robbery ; but I had still more reason to be full of grief when Townsend, addressing him, said—

"Now, my precious tulip, as I wish you to look very genteel and tidy before strangers this morning, I want you to try on these very pretty bracelets," producing a pair of handcuffs, and polishing them with the sleeve of his coat.

"Come, come, Townsend, do not insist upon this—pray, don't—I entreat you, don't ! I shall accompany you and Mr. G—— quietly ; there is no necessity for this harsh treatment, indeed there is not."

"I cannot trust you, old fellow ; you remember the slippery trick you played me once before ; so come along, and let's have no more nonsense."

When we reached Bow Street, we found that Sir Richard had already commenced the business of the court—Vaughan's case soon came on.

When he appeared, Sir Richard observed—"Mr. Fitzgerald, I am sorry to find you again before me."

"Dr. Fortesque *alias* Captain Vaughan, this time, if you please, Sir Richard," observed Townsend.

"Have the goodness to take a seat beside me, Mr. G——," said Sir Richard, addressing me.

"Now, what is the charge, Townsend ?" he asked.

"A bank robbery, your worship," he replied ; "our evidence is complete. We have traced a considerable amount of the property to his possession, and we have besides ample proofs, both direct and circumstantial, that he, in conjunction with a youth who is still at large, effected the robbery by means of counterfeit keys of the strong room and safe of the bank, having previously drugged the young man with a powerful opiate who had charge of the premises, to facilitate the execution of the burglary."

At Sir Richard's request, I then made the statement as

far as my knowledge went; upon which, addressing the prisoner, he asked him if he had any thing to say why he should not be committed to Newgate for trial.

Vaughan drew himself up with an amount of dignity and self-possession, and in language that showed that he had been evidently accustomed to move in the best society, after having attempted to convince the magistrate of his innocence, replied that he should reserve his defence until his trial. Townsend remarked that Vaughan was connected with a gang who had for years carried on a system of plunder, which he now hoped to break up, as he had been enabled to trace many of them, and expected ere long to bring them before him. Vaughan, in consequence of the strong evidence brought against him, was committed by the magistrate to Newgate for trial.

During the interval before the trial, our solicitors were much annoyed day after day by receiving visits from Vaughan's friends and associates. They were mostly young men dressed in the extreme of fashion, and they generally drove up to the door in very stylish cabriolets, with livery servants behind. Their assurance and cool effrontery, as they came swaggering into the office, used often to excite both wonder and amusement. The palpable object of their visits was to intimidate, and arrange so as to prevent the trial being proceeded with.

"Fortesque has powerful friends," they said, and impressed as far as they could upon our solicitors the fact, that they had better in good time be wary as to what they were about, as they could not possibly convict him; and, if they did not desist in his prosecution, they might take the consequences, which might prove very serious. These friendly (?) remonstrances were, of course, treated as they merited.

When the trial came on, Vaughan was defended by the first counsel of the day, and no expense seemed to have been spared for his defence; he was, however, on the clearest evidence, found guilty by the jury, and a sentence of fourteen years' transportation passed upon him. It was altogether a most melancholy case, and gave me much distress, as I afterwards learned that the miserable convict, who was the junior branch of a noble family in Ireland, had from step to step, by means of gambling, thrown away amongst blacklegs and thieves a handsome fortune, and at last became associated with a band of desperadoes and ruffians, who called him their

captain, and who had long baffled the authorities in their endeavours to apprehend and bring them to justice.

The loss of so much property, although we made every exertion to recover it without effect, placed us in much embarrassment and confusion, as several of the bills were about falling due, and we knew that the circumstance of their not being forthcoming would be an excuse to many of the acceptors for their non-payment. We had, however, in a great measure made up our minds to the loss, and the consequent inconvenience which had placed us in such an awkward and perplexing position. This painful solicitude was alleviated by my receiving the following extraordinary letter one evening when I was just about to return home ; it was marked—
PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL.

“ No. —, — COURT, BEVIS MARKS, ST. MARY AXE,
London, 8th March, 18—.”

“ SIR;—I am deputed to inform you that, through the intervention of parties who have the means of knowing where the notes, bills, &c., are to be found that were lately abstracted from your banking office, and who have instructed me to act for them, that I shall be glad to negotiate with you for their recovery, if you will favour me with a call *here* on Wednesday morning next, at nine o'clock.

“ I suppose I do not require to impress upon you the necessity of your maintaining the greatest secrecy in this affair, failing which all chance of your ever receiving the property will inevitably be lost ; as in such case it will be immediately destroyed. You will, therefore, please come *here alone and unattended.*”

“ You know what is at stake, and you can better judge than I can inform you, whether or not this notice is worthy your consideration. I am, sir, your most obedient servant,

“ BENJAMIN LEVI.”

On my receiving this communication I was at a loss how to act, barely time having been allowed me to reach London to enable me to keep this *precious* appointment. I began to think all sorts of things. The letter might have been written by some idle person, intended as a silly hoax, or it might be a trap to inveigle me into a snare for my destruction. However, after due consideration I determined to run all risks.

I therefore instructed our chief cashier how to manage the affairs of the bank in my absence, informing him that I had been suddenly called from home on important business for a few days, and that it would be unnecessary to apprise *any* one of my absence. I had a little more difficulty in appeasing the anxiety of my wife and daughters ; as, from the circumstance of my having been complaining of a severe chest complaint for some weeks, they were apprehensive that I might suffer from two successive nights' travel and exposure to the atmosphere, in the cold month of March. However, seeing my determination, all obstacles were removed. My portmanteau, with the usual necessities, was hurriedly packed, with the accompaniments of refreshments on the road.

When I took my seat in the mail-coach, and was waiting for them to start, I was joined by a very respectable-looking old gentleman, who informed me, in answer to the first usual question, that he was going on all the way to London. He turned out to be but poor company to me, as I was unsuccessful, after several attempts, to draw him into conversation ; and as he took to the top of the coach at daybreak, which he remarked he always preferred when the weather was dry, I did not much regret his absence ; and the guard and coachman had reason to congratulate themselves in his company, as I noticed that he invariably treated them with some refreshment at every stage.

It was past midnight, after a cold and comfortless journey, that we were set down at the "*Swan with Two Necks*," Lad Lane, when I immediately took a coach, and gave directions to drive me to the most quiet and respectable night-house in the neighbourhood. I was conveyed to "Anderton's Hotel," Fleet Street, and never shall I forget the Elysian feeling that I experienced in entering this luxurious hostel. Inwardly extolling Anderton to the skies as the prince of landlords, praying in my gratitude that his house, and exertions to contribute to the entertainment and comfort of his guests, might have a wide-world fame ; and that his viands and wines might be renowned for ever. Never was a man in such a humour as I was to enjoy the comforts placed before him. I was shivering with cold, and nearly famished with hunger, having tasted nothing since I left York. On entering the large room I found a splendid fire, and a small

table ready for supper, with a cover laid for one, as if I had been expected.

In an incredibly short space of time, I had every thing that could tempt placed before me, to which I did ample justice. I had mixed, and was proceeding to discuss a glass of hot brandy-and-water, when the waiter made his appearance with a letter, and said that it had just been handed in by a gentleman, who requested that it might be given to me to-night, or the first thing in the morning.

I replied that there must be some mistake, and it could not possibly be for me, as no one knew my address, or even was aware that I was in London. However, on looking at the direction, *there*, assuredly, was my name in full, and no mistake. I broke the seal, and read the following :—

“LONDON, Tuesday, *Midnight*.

“SIR,—I regret to inform you that our solicitor has been suddenly called from town, and will not return until evening. Will you, therefore, oblige me by making the hour of meeting that gentleman nine o'clock in the evening, instead of the morning, as was arranged?

“I need not warn you against the danger of your communicating with any one on the subject of the object of your journey. Your every movement will be watched, and a breach of this injunction may lead to serious consequences to you.—I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

“J.”

“Well!” I thought, after perusing this epistle, “what will come next? one mystery seems to follow close upon another.”

So I finished my grog, and, being totally exhausted, repaired to my chamber, and was very soon in the luxurious arms of Morpheus; and, by the aid of one of Anderton's voluptuous beds, I arose in the morning refreshed and strengthened, both morally and physically, feeling myself equal to any amount of daring, let it be never so perilous. I must, however, confess that, in strolling about during the day, I had a strange sensation of restraint, and constantly kept looking back, imagining that every person following behind was one of my *keepers*. It was certainly most distracting for me to know that my every act and step was

marked, and under the surveillance and scrutiny of I knew not whom ; so I retired early to my hotel to regain a temporary emancipation, and to pass the remainder of my time as I best could, until the hour appointed for the meeting.

CHAPTER II.—THE ROBBERS' DEN.

HAVING provided myself with a brace of small pistols in case of need, I started with punctuality at the hour fixed upon for my singular and rather hazardous mission. It was a very dark night, and when I reached St. Mary Axe, I had some little difficulty in finding the court near Bevis Marks, which was very indifferently lighted ; and, after groping my way for a considerable time, I at last discovered the house to which I had been directed, and by the light of a miserable lamp at the side of the door, I read in black letters painted on a white ground—"BENJAMIN LEVI, ATTORNEY, 3rd Floor." It was a most forbidding, sombre-looking tenement, built of dingy granite ; and with its narrow spiral staircase and gothic-looking windows, might, in a solitary, country situation, have well passed for some old and neglected baronial residence.

This proceeding altogether, on my part, might appear rash and imprudent, but I was then young, and cannot say that I understood much about fear ; besides, I had stared the danger fully in the face, and was determined to go through with it. When I ascended the first turn of the stair, however, I confess I began to hesitate, and have some *little* misgivings as to the wisdom of advancing further in such a perilous adventure ; but this feeling was only momentary, as, again summoning courage, I, after many awkward turns, at last reached the door. I gave one of those nervous knocks which one is disposed to do, under the doubtful feeling of the reception you are to receive, and which proved sufficiently loud, as it was followed by an echo from the top to the bottom of the stair.

The door was promptly opened by a rather repulsive-looking elderly woman, who inquired if my name was Mr. G—— ; and, having answered in the affirmative, she showed me into

a large room, furnished like a second-class lodging-house, telling me that the gentleman I called for would be with me immediately. The walls were hung with sporting prints, portraits of pedestrians, pugilists, horses, &c., and at the end of the room stood an old-fashioned secretary with writing-desk, covered with fusty law-papers, consisting of sundry writs, executions, captions, bills of exchange, assignments, mortgages, &c., which led me to reflect that many a poor soul, perhaps, had been harassed and brought to an untimely grave by the accursed machinations and artifices of this licensed pettifogging knave. I have often thought that law instruments are a scandal to humanity; what a shame it is that men cannot keep their words without being forced to it!

I again began to think of my safety; and, on trying the door, found that it had been locked outside. I then examined the windows to ascertain whether or not I could give alarm to the neighbours in the event of danger, or an attempt being made upon my life, and found them *also* all fast. I then felt that I was *caged* to all intents and purposes.

In this state of perplexity, and the peculiar and novel situation in which I was placed, I had continued ruminating for about twenty minutes, when the door of the apartment was slowly opened, and a young man, dressed in the extreme of the fashion, came sailing in. He had a great display of rings, gold chains, &c., about his person; he appeared to be about one or two-and-twenty years of age. He spoke with great self-confidence, his language being affected and measured.

"Ah! Mr. G——," he drawled out, after surveying me with no little effrontery, "how dee daw?"

I thanked him, and replied that I was in perfect health.

"We had a cold journey last night," he observed.

"Yes," I remarked; "I seldom experienced a more chilly night."

"By the time we reached Lad Lane, I felt myself as if half frozen," he said; "and *you* certainly looked it."

"I do not understand," I returned; "the only passenger with me was an elderly gentleman."

"Exactly so, sir; who travelled outside during the day," he said, interrupting me; "and, I daresay, you would have some difficulty in identifying him with myself?"

"I certainly should," I replied; and expressed my astonish-

ment at the success of his disguise, which explained by whom the letter I received last night was written.

"The fact is, Mr. G——," he said, "we have to be very careful whom we trust, and we determined to watch your movements, as they are *now*, and will be, until our business is completed, to prevent the possibility of our being betrayed. But we will proceed to business, if you please; I am sorry to say that our solicitor is not yet returned, but we expect him every hour. Mean time I may inform you, that we are perfectly ready to carry out the business, if it suits *you* to agree to our terms; excepting one hundred pounds in your own notes, the property remains untouched, and is in safe keeping."

"Might I ask," I said, "what sum will be required to meet your demands for the restitution of the bills, &c."

"Five hundred guineas in gold," he said, "to be paid on or before this time to-morrow."

I told him I considered that a large sum, and that I doubted whether I should be justified in agreeing to pay it without some consideration.

"Oh, certainly—certainly!" he returned; "we know that it is more important to you than to us that the transaction should be closed to-morrow, as we observe many of the bills fall due within four days, and I do not require to tell *you* that the sum asked is a mere trifle compared to the amount which we have in our possession; but by this time to-morrow evening you may have determined what course you intend to pursue, when our solicitor will have returned, and the business can be settled one way or other at once."

"But what guarantee," I inquired, "have I that you will act honourably towards me in performing your part of the transaction, should I determine to bring the amount you require with me?"

"As to that," he replied, "we have no means, power, or opportunity of satisfying you of our intention faithfully to perform what we stipulate; your only security is to take our word, if you consider it worth any thing, and I now pledge myself that *our* part of the transaction will be honourably executed."

"Then, sir, I shall take the matter in all its bearings into consideration, and by this hour to-morrow evening I will communicate with you in some shape or other."

"Should you not make your appearance at the hour appointed," he remarked, "we shall consider that you decline proceeding further in the negotiation;" and, after again cautioning me against holding communication with any one on the subject, he wished me a good-night, and I thankfully hurried back to my hotel.

After many an anxious thought, and looking at the case in every point of view—the fearful loss and inconvenience that we should be put to on the one hand, and the discredit (did it ever come to be known) of our conniving at, and compounding a felony of such an atrocious description, on the other—I determined at last to agree to the terms of these miscreants, in whose power I was; so on the following morning I went to the office of our agents, and obtained the needful, which I had considerable difficulty in converting into gold, which at the time was scarcely to be had; and again, not without considerable excitement I repaired to Bevis Marks, punctual to my appointment, at the hour fixed. Upon this occasion I was not kept waiting, as I found my friend of the former evening and two other persons seated at table, seemingly engaged in taking an inventory of the stolen bills, notes &c., which were scattered in confusion before them.

One of the persons, who proved to be their (so-called) solicitor, had the marked and unmistakable features of a scion of the tribe of Israel. He fixed his dark, little, restless eye upon me as I entered, as if desirous to scan my most inward thoughts; and his expression of countenance was that of the most indurate, unmitigated knave, and vile sensualist, without bowels of commiseration of any kind. The other was an elderly, stout-looking man, with a bloated weather-beaten face, protruding lips, and carbuncled nose, low and retreating forehead, with an exuberant stomach, and grizzled dark hair cut short, all indicating too plainly that he was a man of gross and debased tastes and habits; at the same time he had an expression of dogged, cool, and determined villany, with the sanguinary rapacity of a wolf. He wore short knee-breeches and top-boots that had seen some service, and, from his general appearance, I came to the conclusion that he was either a coachman, farmer, or horse-dealer. He was seated at the end of the table with his elbows resting upon it, and his two hands supporting his cheeks; during our con-

versation he was frequently appealed to, but his replies were only given by nod or shake of his head, always keeping his large, piercing, watery eyes upon the speaker.

"Mr. Carter and Mr. Levi," said the young man, introducing the parties. "Pray, be seated, Mr. G——."

"We have just been overhauling your papers," observed the Jew, breaking the conversation, "as we knew you could not fail to be with us this evening."

"Have you brought the cash?"

I replied in the affirmative.

"Then be so kind as cast your eye over the different documents, satisfy yourself, and inform us whether or not you find all correct."

I examined them as particularly as I could under such circumstances, and replied that, as far as I could judge from memory, they *were* correct. Upon this, Levi packed them in my presence into a parcel, which, having corded and sealed, he passed across the table to me, and for which, in exchange, I handed him over the bag containing the gold; upon my doing so, (Shylock like) he produced a pair of scales, and into them he emptied the contents of the bag, which, after carefully weighing, he pronounced to be correct.

"Having finished our business, I trust, satisfactorily to all parties," said the Jew, "you must now join us, Mr. G——, in a little refreshment?" and, ere I had time to resist or refuse such an invitation, he rung the bell, and an excellent supper was placed upon the table, so I was compelled to make a virtue of necessity, and took my seat with the rest. We had not well commenced when we were joined by four other guests, who appeared to have been invited.

It would have been difficult for any one to have given an opinion as to what description of persons these new-comers were from their appearance; they certainly had neither a trading nor professional look; at a hazard I should have marked them down as strolling-players, or gentlemen's servants out of place, sporting the cast-off clothes of their late masters. There was much and loud talking, principally on sporting subjects, and it was not long ere I discovered that they all responded to, and were best known by, flash names.

The "COUNT" was a dark, stout, athletic man, with immense black whiskers and bushy black hair, which possessed the convenience of being removed at pleasure, and which in

the course of the evening he did, doffing both wig and whiskers, effectually changing his appearance and character.

"MOONLIGHT JACK" was a tall thin man, whom I discovered had been the marker of a billiard-room, and who talked incessantly, particularly on the subject of his former avocations; of the noblemen and "*gents*" he had been on an intimate footing with, the immense sums he had seen lost and won, &c. In the course of the evening a considerable metamorphosis also took place in *his personnel*, from his divesting himself of a large rough coat, substituting his own dark hair for a light wig, which he removed with a pair of spectacles. My young travelling companion, I found, went by the cognomen of "DANDY DENT;" whilst the "PARSON," a little thickset personage, with a ruddy, laughing face, appeared, from the dilapidated state of his outward man, to have been (to use a technical expression) "*out of luck*;" which misfortune, however, did not affect the animal spirits of this gentleman, as he afforded much amusement to his friends by his never-ending anecdotes, repartees, and flashes of fancy.

"SMUGGLER BOB" appeared to be a gentleman of a taciturn disposition; he seldom engaged in the conversation, and his replies when appealed to (as he seemed to be looked on by all with deference for his advice or judgment on any disputed point), were generally given in monosyllables.

The very stout gentleman, whom I have already introduced to you, and whose taciturnity I have noticed in our business transactions, enjoyed the *sobriquet* of "BURLY BILL." The conversation in a short time became general, in which I occasionally joined. The "PARSON" seemed to be a man of education, and discussed with intelligence the public topics of the day; not the most distant allusion was made by any of the company to the robbery, or the previous business of the evening.

The punch and wine began soon to pass freely round. I remarked that "a finer glass of Madeira I had never tasted."

"Pray, enjoy it, then," returned the Jew; "my dear sir, we have plenty more from whence it came." Accordingly, bottle after bottle was produced, and all seemed disposed for conviviality, each contributing to the evening's amusement, having all their peculiar accomplishments.

"DANDY DENT" gave several specimens of mimicry and

ventriloquism, an art in which he was singularly gifted. The "PARSON" sung a flash song, the termination of every stanza of which was—

"For 'tis my delight on a shiny night," &c.

The "COUNT" told a very interesting story (rather savouring of the marvellous) of an astonishing feat he had performed with the assistance of a favourite mare; and "MOONLIGHT JACK" figured and excelled in the *elegant* imitations of pigs, poultry, singing-birds, Mr. Punch, and sundry animals, both foreign and domestic. My health was proposed by my friend "DANDY DENT," and vociferously received and drank by the company, followed by that most *classical* and *inspiring* strain—

"For he's a jolly good fellow, &c., &c.,
Hip, hip! hip, hip! hurrah!"

"The hours flew bye" (although I cannot say exactly on "angels' wings,") and the "wee short hour ayont the twal" had approached ere I was aware. "The mirth and fun grew fast and furious." "BURLY BILL'S" tongue was now unloosened; he attempted to tell a long-winded story of two 'osses he had purchased at the last Barnett fair, and offered long odds that he would trot one of them in single harness, and with *his* heavy weight ride the other against any two "'osses" in the kingdom. He did not seem to be listened to with much attention, as, in endeavouring to extol the prowess of another quadruped, his voice was drowned in the general clamour that now prevailed, and never succeeded in progressing further with his tale than the commencement, raising his voice at each attempt in the futile desire to excite their interest. "I've got a pony—I've got a pony—I've got a pony, that—that—that;" but the more he tried to attract the attention of the company, the less chance he appeared to have of success, so gave the attempt at last up in despair.

The Jew also became most communicative, by giving us several anecdotes of his peculiar talents and sagacity in connection with *his* calling; how that, by his professional exertions, the life of Dick Reynolds had been saved, and his sentence commuted to transportation; of the many extraordinary captures he had made of debtors about to abscond, &c., and which racy and interesting narratives were received with

the most unbounded applause. Bets were also offered and taken by the others on the horses that were booked for the next Derby, whether Crib would obtain the championship, &c., &c.

After many unsuccessful attempts, I at last was enabled to make preparations for my departure, upon which they all in a body proposed to see me safely to my hotel, one of them relieving me of the trouble of carrying my valued parcel. They made much noise as we traversed the streets, for which they were often informed by the watchmen that their conduct was extremely reprehensible, and their replies to whom were neither very civil nor conciliatory.

To my great joy we at length reached Anderton's, when the parcel was handed to me, and I received the individual good-wishes for a safe journey home from all, with many remarks and compliments that I was a jolly cove, a rare trump, a brick, &c.; and I should have had the honour (?) of being serenaded with three cheers, had I not with some difficulty suppressed such an exuberance in their expressions of *respect* and *attachment* to my person—a compliment which, at such an hour, would have been rather irregular; but informed them that it was nevertheless fully appreciated.

I started early that same morning for home, having previously written to my partner, Sir Walter, to meet me on my arrival. On my informing him of the success that had attended my journey, he held up his hands with delight and astonishment; but I kept him and all others in the dark as to the means by which I had accomplished this extraordinary and fortunate transaction; and many years had elapsed ere I could summon courage to acknowledge my having been guilty of compounding such an infamous felony, or of narrating the details of my carousal in a den of miscreant thieves and vagabonds.

The Disunited Family.

CHAPTER I.—FAMILY BRAWLS.

It will be thought, and with justice, that I sometimes carried my characteristic and fearless spirit for adventure beyond the bounds of prudence, as in the case of my visit to my friends (?) in Bevis Marks ; but “young men’s knocks old men feel,” and I imagine that I am now, to some extent, paying the penalty of certain youthful indiscretions, the consequence of an ardent, daring, and sanguine temperament, with a feeling of perfect confidence in my own strength, both in body and mind, which for years were never at rest, as I cannot tax myself, during the long lease I have enjoyed of robust health, with having ever eaten the bread of idleness, my motto having always been, “Be up and stirring ; those who live upon hope die fasting.”

Without labour happiness cannot possibly exist. ’Tis the philosopher’s stone—the grand secret that exhilarates our energies and gladdens our hearts—the generator of mental tranquillity and domestic peace ; and what a melancholy sight does the contrast exhibit, as for a time was exemplified in the instance of Colonel Keith, whose story I shall relate !

Where there is a want of peace, no enjoyment of whatever nature can exist or be sustained ; and religion (with all our higher duties) becomes totally indifferent to us where strife *is*—denuding us of all those generous and noble characteristics that are the bonds of social life.

Better one handful with quietness, than two handfuls with travail and vexation of spirit.

It often happens that, in passing through life, we are compelled to act, and to be placed in situations to which we have the greatest objection, and even repugnance ; and there is not a more ill-requited or thankless office than that of being

called in as a mediator in a family brawl, to quell the riot, and, if possible, establish peace. One of Solomon's wisest truisms is, "that a house divided in itself can never stand;" and, in confirmation of this, I have witnessed too many cases.

There is nothing in nature to me more distressing than to see discord and contention existing in a domestic circle; and there is nothing more charming than to witness that interchange of confidence, little courtesies, and affection, which pervades the every-day life of a well-bred, happy, and united family.

Colonel Henry Keith was the only son of Mr. Keith of Brooklands. His mother died immediately after having given him birth. Mr. Keith was the representative of one of the oldest, proudest, and most respectable families in the county, the rental of whose estate was about three thousand per annum. He, however, was a man of extravagant habits; kept a pack of hounds, and patronized the turf; so that, after a lapse of years, he became much embarrassed in his pecuniary affairs. He had long carried on extensive transactions with the bank, and was most irregular in his mode of doing business. He got much behind in his account with us; and at last, after great patience, we were compelled (to use a vulgar expression) "to put on the screw," when we discovered that he had become heavily in our debt. To secure ourselves, I was therefore compelled to become the mortgagee to a large amount on his estate, so that his rental passed regularly through our hands, and the residue, after paying the interest, left him an annuity barely sufficient to keep up appearances, and support his establishment in any thing like the style in which it had been done by his ancestors.

He was much attached to, and most proud of his only son, flattering himself that, if he lived, he would one day relieve him of his difficulties, and clear the burdens off his family estate. He gave him a most liberal education; and the young man had been four years at college when he proved himself to be possessed of no ordinary talents, having carried off many honours. These accounts reaching his father, afforded him the greatest possible gratification, and buoyed him up with hopes that he would prove the greatest possible support to him; he therefore expressed a wish that he would turn his attention to the study of the law, preparatory to his qualifying himself for the profession of a

barrister. Henry, however, in conjunction with his studies, had devoted a large portion of his time to a more tender but less promising employment to his future prospects in life; he had engaged in an *affaire de cœur* with a young lady of surpassing beauty, and highly accomplished, the daughter of a respectable, and it was said wealthy tradesman, whom at nineteen, he privately married, she being only seventeen.

When this intelligence reached the ears of his father, he became almost frantic with rage; he would hear no reason. By this step, he maintained that his family name had been tarnished for ever, and so disgraced that it would never recover the blot cast upon it; and he felt this the more, as he had hoped some day to have seen him united to a daughter of a nobleman in the neighbourhood, who had made no concealment of her attachment to him. As was usual with him in all cases of difficulty and distress, he came to me for counsel how to act under the circumstances. I found him at first in no humour to pardon his son, or abate the sentence he had determined to pass upon him for this ill-assorted marriage, and undutiful conduct; viz., that he would disown and cast him off for ever, making a will leaving all that he might possess to a distant relation.

I tried to argue him out of this very unreasonable resolution, in which I was to some extent successful. I told him that his son had certainly married, according to the common usage of society, "beneath himself" as regarded birth, but that the wife took rank from the husband; and that, although she might perhaps be of inferior caste, she was his selection and the object of his affections, and, from what I could learn, was ladylike, handsome, and accomplished, and might prove a great comfort to him in his declining years. Besides, as his father was reputed rich, he might, perhaps, be the means in assisting to pay off the mortgage on the estate.

Mr. Keith left me in better humour; but still far from being reconciled to the conduct of his wayward son. After the lapse of a few months, however, of solitary reflection, temper yielded to the force of nature and affection, and he called one day to request that I would write to Henry, informing him that I had his authority to invite him and his wife to Brooklands. This invitation was immediately accepted, and in the course of a week or two they made their appearance.

Mrs. Henry Keith soon became a great favourite with the old man. She was acquiescent, diffident, and respectful to him in her manners, which flattered his vanity ; and, from being long unaccustomed to those sympathies and tender attentions which can flow only from the heart and hands of an interested and affectionate female, he felt and appreciated all those little kindnesses which she constantly lavished upon him, and in a short time began to feel that his comforts were increased, and his happiness enhanced by her society ; so much so, that one day he went so far as to acknowledge to me, that perhaps, after all, Henry had not been so very unwise in his selection of a partner for life ; and these feelings were strengthened and confirmed, by her giving birth to a son and heir to the estate, and, within a year or two following, to another son, succeeded by a daughter.

Things went on pretty well and smoothly for some time between Henry and his father ; but both having violent tempers, this did not long continue, as I now constantly heard of their having disagreements, and even serious quarrels, in which I was frequently appealed to by both parties. On one occasion matters went so far as to cause an open and more than usually serious rupture, so much so that Mr. Keith ordered his son from the house.

Henry's proud and uncompromising spirit could not brood this indignity, so he took him at his word, and the following day called to inform me the state of affairs, and his determination to leave the country, and for this purpose entreated me to assist him in procuring a commission in the army, as nothing would induce him to live under such thralldom. I made every endeavour to turn his mind from such a resolve ; but it was all without avail. I therefore, having some indirect influence at the Horse Guards, applied for a commission for him ; and, in a short time, I obtained his cornetcy in a dragoon regiment, at that time on active service abroad, the purchase-money for which I advanced.

Whilst preparations were going on for him to join his regiment, I effected a partial reconciliation with him and his father, when it was arranged that his wife and children should remain at Brooklands in his absence. Henry, although not yet two-and-twenty, had grown remarkable for his fine, manly appearance. He was above six feet high, and his figure was erect and unusually stout. He parted with his

wife and family with much apparent grief; and when he appeared in uniform, to take leave of his father, and ask his blessing, a most affecting scene took place between them, which was followed by an entire reconciliation.

On joining his regiment, his promotion was very rapid, from the circumstance of its having been engaged in almost all the struggles in the peninsular war: he on several occasions distinguished himself so as to call forth the highest compliments from the commander-in-chief, who made special mention of his name in his despatches home, and, from step to step, he was from pure merit appointed to the command of the — Lancers; he proved a strict disciplinarian, but from his consistency, gentlemanly demeanour, and courteous behaviour at mess, &c., to his fellow-officers, with his attention to the comforts of the privates, there was no man more respected or esteemed in the army than Colonel Keith. It was my painful duty at this time to communicate to him the deaths of his father, his wife, and his father-in-law, all of which events took place within the space of six months; the latter leaving to his daughter's family a fortune which enabled me nearly to clear off the mortgage on the estate of his ancestors. He wrote me, requesting that I would take the management of his affairs, with particular directions as to the education of his children. The two boys, Henry and George, I placed at Harrow school, and Anne at one of the first seminaries of the metropolis.

The intelligence of the different bereavements he had so unexpectedly met with, made a deep impression on his sensitive heart: he was now seldom seen except upon duty, and it was remarked that his nature and bearing had undergone a complete change. He seemed regardless of his personal safety, and his orders were given in a manner so stern and repulsive that he was beginning to lose much of that popularity which he had attained by the previous "suaviter" he had practised to all those under his command. The letters I at this time received from him were written in a very desponding style, and again requested that I would conduct any necessary improvements on the estate and mansion according to my own discretion, but did not appear to take much interest in them. In one of his letters he spoke of the little chance he ever had of settling at home, as the campaign in which he was engaged might be protracted for years.

Although ever exposed and present where danger was, Colonel Keith was fortunate in always having escaped without injury until the battle of Vittoria, where he finished his brilliant career. In the early part of the engagement, in making a charge, to the bravery of which Wellington, in admiration, called the attention of his staff, he received a blow from a spent ball on the head, which stunned him for a time, knocking off his helmet, and he fought out the battle (at the doctor's request) with his head bound with a handkerchief. Wherever the greatest danger was, his presence was conspicuous in the midst of it, with his regiment. Beresford, having noticed that his horse was shot under him, sent one of his own chargers, with the request that he would accept of it, and a message with one of his aides-de-camp, complimenting him on his bravery. The result of this great battle is too well known to require comment here; it might be said to have given the finishing blow to the war, as the French army scarcely ever recovered itself, even up to the battle of Leipsic. Hill's dexterous manœuvre in deploying his division, so as to attack and check the advance of the enemy's left flank, finished the day's work. They took to their heels helter-skelter, leaving all their guns, ammunition, and appurtenances behind them; and, on our army marching in triumph into the town of Vittoria, the large square was found to be filled with all their valuable baggage, which they had abandoned in the general panic.

On the great road which passes along the slope of the adjoining hill overlooking the field, were assembled a number of the French gentry connected with the army, principally composed of ladies and children, who had come to witness the expected defeat of the English, and were stationed, with the horses taken from their carriages, in a similar manner to that we have often seen practised at reviews in Hyde Park. When the enemy were in full retreat, a message came from the commander-in-chief to Colonel Keith, requesting him to clear away this aristocratic mob, whose retreat was now cut off by the advance of our pursuing troops. He accordingly, with a squadron of his regiment, came galloping upon them at full speed. They had little idea of the scrape they had got into, and he found them talking and laughing immoderately. When he approached the carriages, which had again got their horses attached, one of the ladies, in an authoritative

tone of voice, requested to be directed or conveyed to the French camp; but Colonel Keith, in the spirit of mischief, determined to put their courage to the test. Amongst the captured fair ones he discovered were a Countess St. Leon, and the Countess de St. Pierre, the daughter of the celebrated author of "Paul and Virginia."

"*Pardonnez-moi*," he said, saluting them *à la militaire*, "but you are all our prisoners." Upon this he gave the command to his troopers—"Right about, front form. Carbineers, prime and load. Rear rank, take close order—slope swords—**MARCH.**" And off the cavalcade proceeded towards the town.

This proceeding, upon which they never had for a moment calculated, caused much dismay, terror, and tribulation, amongst them. The weeping, and wailing, and wringing of hands of the ladies, with the caterwauling of the children, caused Colonel Keith to think that, perhaps, he had carried the joke nearly far enough; so, when they reached the town, they found that, instead of being locked up in a prison surrounded with stone walls, as he had threatened, quarters were procured for them in the principal hotels, and when he visited them, with his orderlies, in the evening, he found them all most comfortably enjoying themselves with music, cards, &c. Toilet appendages, with night-gowns, night-caps, &c., however, were in sad request, for the want of which they did not know how they possibly could manage. This *distressing* circumstance was, however, considerably alleviated by the visits of several of our officers' ladies, who made contributions to overcome this difficulty.

On calling at headquarters the following morning, Colonel Keith, on narrating the circumstance of the capture of the ladies, Wellington, who enjoyed the joke, gave orders that they should be detained for a few days as a punishment for their temerity, and then set at liberty with an escort, accompanied with a flag of truce, until they joined the rear-guard of the enemy's lines.

Colonel Keith, from having paid no attention to the concussion he had received in his head on the previous day's engagement, began now to feel the effects of his neglect, and became suddenly prostrated, both mentally and physically, which was followed by a violent attack of brain fever. His quarters were in the same hotel with a portion of the French ladies, with whom, from his unremitting kindness and atten-

tion in anticipating all their wants and comforts, he had, even in so short a period, become a most especial favourite ; and it was a bone of contention amongst them who should have the gratification of contributing to his wants, and smoothing his pillow.

The Countess St. Leon, whose husband had fallen at Corunna, and whose younger brother was a colonel in the French army, was the one selected for this delicate office, as the regimental doctor had ordered the greatest quietness and tranquillity, and would only allow one at a time to enter Keith's apartment.

He continued in a state of delirium for more than ten days ; and when the rest of her party had, with an escort, joined their friends, the Countess St. Leon remained behind as sick-nurse of Colonel Keith.

She was a most interesting young creature ; and, although a widow, still not more than two-and-twenty. From her mother being a Spaniard, she took the cast of countenance peculiar to her country, being a lovely brunette. Her large, lustrous jet-black eyes seemed to melt and overflow with tenderness whenever she approached the object of her solicitude, and were filled with tears when he suffered pain, or when the attack of his incoherent raving continued longer than usual. Her raven-black hair, beautifully arched eyebrows, and slightly aquiline nose, were mellowed by a pensive and melancholy expression of countenance, that excited the sympathy and increased the interest of all with whom she came in contact ; and such was the angel of mercy, whom, with noiseless step, Henry Keith saw constantly fitting before him in his troubled dreams.

It was long ere he was able to move from his couch. The fever had reduced him to the lowest degree of weakness, and Madame St. Leon still continued to attend, cherish, and comfort him.

It was on the fifth day after he had gained sufficient strength to take his usual walk, with the young countess by his side, that she apprised him of her having made her arrangements, now that he had so far recovered, for her departure. This communication, so unexpected and made so suddenly, had the effect, in his weak state, of causing him to be seized with a return of his malady, and for twelve hours his brain was again evidently moved. He now in his

delirium talked of his beloved "Marie," who should never leave him; to all which the countess listened with not an unwilling ear. On the following day, when he again had recovered sufficient strength, and when left alone with the countess, he began to talk of what he had suffered, of what she had done for him, which had made an indelible impression on his heart. This he followed up with a declaration of love and affection, at the same time imploring her forgiveness, and entreating her compassion; as to be enabled to call her his wife would be the consummation of his happiness, and perhaps the preservation of his life. She burst into tears, and he obtained from her the indirect acknowledgment that, during her attendance at his sick-bed, her feelings for him had assumed a character far beyond that of common friendship and sympathy.

In the course of a few weeks, Colonel Keith and the Countess St. Leon were privately married, according to the Roman Catholic faith, she being a rigid Papist, and, when they arrived in London, the ceremony was again performed in a Protestant church. He wrote to me giving a short, and, I thought, rather inflated account of his marriage, with a description of his wife, and requested, as it was now his intention to come down and take possession of Brooklands, that I would kindly see that the house, &c., was in proper order for their reception. After some weeks had elapsed, Colonel Keith obtained his discharge, and retired from the army, to which he had been such an honour, on full pay; and, on being presented at court with the countess, the king, as a reward to her husband for his signal services, conferred upon the latter the honour of her right to retain her title in this country, and to take the rank of a British countess.

Great were the rejoicings when the gallant Colonel Keith and his lady took possession of Brooklands: the tenantry, collected in a large body, formed themselves into a procession, and, with flags and banners, met and conducted them to their future home. The young people, Henry, George, and Anne, were sent for to participate in the gaiety; and for weeks nothing but the interchange of visitings with the surrounding gentry occupied their attention. Lady Keith was much and deservedly admired by all. With the characteristic manners of France, she possessed that affable and accessible demeanour which is the peculiar feature in the manners of

our high-bred ladies. Henry and George (the former of whom had now been twelve months at college) had sprung up two fine promising fellows; and little Anne, who resembled her mother, had become a great pet with her papa, even in some measure to excite the jealousy of the countess, who used to make little remarks which, although apparently in jest, came from a deeper source.

In a month or two the young men returned to their studies, and little Anne remained at home as a companion to the countess.

Things went on most smoothly for some years, and no family were more admired, or courted, or envied, than the inmates of Brooklands. Henry and George had returned home; the former, at his father's desire, was shortly to join the army, and the latter, with the assistance of a tutor, who lived in the family, was constantly engaged in studying for the law. One would have thought that they would have been both natural and delightful companions to their father; but it proved otherwise—his mind did not take that rational and particular turn. On the contrary, he kept his sons at a great distance from him, and they, as a matter of course, withheld from him much of that confidence which is the basis of all domestic harmony. I heard of little occasional squabbles between the colonel and his sons, but they never reached, excepting myself, beyond the bounds of the mansion. The colonel sometimes complained to me that his sons were contradictory, and frequently undutiful; and *they* again said that their father had lately become unreasonable, illiberal, and capricious. I was truly sorry to remark the increase of this spirit amongst them.

CHAPTER II.—PEACE RESTORED.

As years passed on, the family at Brooklands still continued to dash about; no equipage was more attractive on the race-course than that of Colonel Keith's, with his lovely countess and daughter; their carriage was constantly surrounded with the fashionable and gay, and, when they appeared at the assembly at night, it was whispered around the room what a happy family Colonel Keith's must be. But, alas! "all is not gold that glitters;" it was doomed that

erelong a dense cloud, which was to completely o'ercast the splendour of this sunny scene, should fall upon them in the shape of discord and strife. The silver cord of affection was broken, and, favoured as they were with every blessing, they became a disunited, unhappy, and miserable family. I never could exactly trace the cause of this disruption. Colonel Keith occasionally complained of violent pains in his head, arising from the neglected wound he received at Vittoria, and the doctor strongly advised, when under its influence, that he should be treated with the greatest gentleness and delicacy, otherwise its effects might tend to produce violent attacks of passion, and even temporary intellectual aberration. These predictions began to be verified, particularly if he was excited by wine or any sudden impulse, when he appeared to lose all control over himself—a thing so entirely at variance with that self-command and dignity in which he had always been most conspicuous. There was one circumstance which gave him much annoyance, and which led afterwards to high words between him and the countess. She was in the habit of being constantly visited by a Catholic priest, whose influence in the family, the colonel had noticed with distress, was daily increasing. He learned that, whenever absent from home, this person used to take every advantage, not only in the endeavour to seduce his servants and dependants over to his faith, but even had made considerable progress in turning the mind of little Anne to his views, and would have succeeded had not her brothers interfered in time: in fact, the establishment at Brooklands, for a considerable period, was governed by the baneful influence of that petty priestly despotism which has inflicted on a noble people such incalculable wrongs. When this was discovered, Colonel Keith ordered the man from his house, never again to enter it; but he was not much less annoyed when the countess used to drive off every morning in her pony phaeton, to visit this man in the neighbouring village where he resided, and had his little chapel, which was attended only by a few Irish labourers of the lowest description. I was in hopes that the removal of this person would be the cause of re-establishing peace and love at Brooklands, but it did not appear so; matters seemed to get worse rather than better. It was the more distressing to me, who was their constant visitor and counsellor, when individually I knew them all to be most amiable and intelli-

gent ; but when together, it seemed as if their natures were changed—a very curse, in this respect, appeared to hang over them.

It was folly, I learned, to attempt bettering matters : when I *did* interfere, I found myself invariably made a party in their petty disputes. Colonel Keith's temper became more and more irascible ; however, this was submitted to, and borne with by his servants and dependants on account of his goodness of heart, which was constantly displaying itself in his unostentatious acts of charity to the poor, and his liberality to his tenantry. Indeed, every member of the family was remarkable for kindly feeling, liberality, and charity, which used to lead all who knew their unhappy tendency, to express their sorrow that they denied themselves a little of that enjoyment which they so liberally conferred upon so many others.

Colonel Keith was a keen sportsman, and, if he evinced illiberality in any thing, it was in the preservation of his game. Bradley, one of his late troopers, who had acted as his servant during all the peninsular war, he brought home with him, and made him his gamekeeper. He was a tall, dauntless, and athletic fellow, singularly adapted by nature for such an office, and the name of Bradley was a terror to every poacher. He knew his master's nature well, and his master also knew the attachment that he had to his person ; still they were, I learned, constantly quarrelling and making it up again.

One scene of this description I shall never forget. A stream only divided our properties, and when the current was not running very strong, we used to cross in a punt (which brought us within half a mile of each other), and exchange visits, I having profusion of pheasants and partridges, whilst his high lands were well stocked with grouse and black game. On one of these occasions I had engaged to join him at Brooklands for a day's sport, at nine o'clock in the morning ; however, there had been sickness in my family, and the doctor had come from a distance early, but protracted his visit, so as to detain me an hour or two beyond the time appointed, it being twelve o'clock before I reached Brooklands. When I arrived I found Colonel Keith walking about in his library, and evidently out of temper, from impatience in being kept so long waiting.

"Well," he said, "you are come at last!"

"Colonel Keith," I replied, "I have to apologise for being so long behind the time we fixed, but you know the anxiety I have lately had; and the doctor entered just as I was about to start, and I was very desirous to see and talk with him. I am very sorry that I could not get away sooner."

"Oh!" returned he, "you have been engaged in women's work; a sportsman is never behind his time."

"But the day is still young," I replied; "let us now start, and lose no further time in talking."

"The countess expects us to lunch," he said, "ere we go; so we had better give her her way." And we adjourned to the dining-room.

Whilst engaged at our refreshment, he rang the bell, and desired the servant to send up Bradley, to consult as to the ground we should go over, the dogs we should take, &c. On the servant appearing, he, in evident terror and apprehension for the consequences, told his master that Bradley had not returned from town, where he had gone, as directed, early in the morning, for a supply of shot. When he heard this, he instantly tossed down his knife and fork, started to his feet, became as pale as death itself, and assumed the aspect of a fiend.

"What!" he exclaimed, "not returned!—the infernal villain!—the d—d scoundrel!—the miscreant thief!—the vagabond! When he does come I will assuredly kill him!"

The countess looked distressed and alarmed. Henry and Anne left the room; and, when the first burst of his frenzy had somewhat subsided, I tried to appease him.

"Where is that smart lad," I said, "that accompanied us the last day? He will do very well until the keeper returns, who, doubtless, has been detained by some unavoidable cause—perhaps some accident has happened to him."

"Nothing of the sort!" he exclaimed; "besides, that boy cannot hunt the dogs, nor does he know where to find the game."

"Come away," I said, in my endeavour to calm the storm, and in reply to the many appeals by anxious looks to do so which I received from the countess; "let us be gone. I venture to say that, with your young groom and this youth, we shall get on famously."

At last, by dint of argument similar to what one would

have used to a wayward boy, and much coaxing, I got him prevailed upon to come away. In passing through the shrubbery, the countess's spaniel flushed a couple of woodcocks, the first of the season, which the colonel shot at and killed right and left. I exclaimed—"Well done!" and this unexpected feat put him into better temper. We did not go far from home, but, on the whole, had a good day's sport; returning in the evening with the bags well filled with a miscellaneous assortment of game.

Keith made no allusion on the subject of the delinquent during the day, except by an occasional inadvertent word of reproach, such as the scoundrel—the miscreant—the ingrate, &c.

When we reached Brooklands I proposed returning home, remarking that it was too late to cross the river, and, consequently, I should have a long drive. However, he would not hear of my moving, and when I mentioned that my family would be anxious about me, he replied—

"You need not be apprehensive of that, as I sent a messenger two hours ago to inform Mrs. G—— that you intended to stop for the night." And a look of entreaty that I would do so from the countess, with a feeling that my services might be required on the return of Bradley, determined me to remain, resolving to start early for home on the following morning.

In the course of the evening, he once or twice asked the servant, "Has that blackguard made his appearance yet?" And, on being answered in the negative, I thought I could discover, from his expression of countenance, something like a fear of the possibility of danger of some sort having happened to him, with a look of apprehension for his safety.

I arose early the following morning, and, being informed that the colonel was already up and in his dressing-room, I went to take my leave of him. On knocking at the door, he cried, "Come away," and on entering the room I found him engaged shaving. He would not hear of my returning, "We had only half a day of it," he said, "yesterday; the weather is most promising, and I have already apprised your family that you will not return until evening." Whilst we were conversing, his valet entered, and said "that the keeper was below, if the colonel had any orders?" Had each of us received a shock of electricity, it could not have been more

startling than the effects of this intelligence. All his rage seemed to return with renewed force, whilst *I* made up my mind to a case of manslaughter at the least. With a flourish of the razor in his hand, he shrieked—"Send him up instantly—send the infernal villain up!" In a few minutes Bradley made his appearance, and seemingly quite prepared to encounter any outrage.

"Well!" gasped out the colonel, after having had some difficulty in recovering the power of speech. "Are you not a precious scoundrel? You atrocious miscreant, what have you to say for your conduct? give an account of yourself!"

Bradley during this address stood like a statue, with his hands in the pockets of his shooting-coat, and at last putting on a bold front he replied—

"I got drunk, Colonel Keith."

"Dr—dr—drunk?"

"Yes, sir, beastly drunk, with our old sergeant-major, whom I met in town; and, what is more sir, I drank the money you gave me to buy the shot."

This confession seemed to take Keith quite aback, and appeared for a few moments to puzzle him what course to take; at last he, in a violent rage, sprung to his feet, exclaiming, with another flourish of the razor—

"Leave my presence, sir—get out of my sight, and never more look me in the face!"

Thankful for such a termination to what I had the most serious apprehension of mischief, and probably bloodshed, I made the remark—"Cool and candid enough, however."

"Yes," said the colonel; "I am aware I have spoiled the fellow, and he knows it."

This morning we made our preparations, and started early for our sport. I was rather anxious to know what course Bradley would pursue; but my mind was soon set at rest on this subject, as, on reaching the court-yard, we found him fully equipped and ready for the "field," with all the dogs dancing around him.

"What the devil," said Keith, "are you doing here, you rascal; have I not given you your discharge from my service?"

"Yes, sir," returned Bradley—"you *have*, Colonel Keith," taking off his hat; "but if *you* don't know when you have a good servant, I know when I have a good master, and I

sha'n't go the length of my toe, that's flat!" so, without affording him time for a reply, and whistling up the dogs that had by this time ranged to some distance, he strode on with a dignified and independent air before us.

"He's an incorrigible scoundrel," muttered Keith, "and the only man in his station I never could manage or subdue." We made at once for the moors, and had a splendid day's sport. Keith never missed a shot, and Bradley exhibited more than his usual tact during the whole day, although his master and he never exchanged a word.

It was late before we returned to Brooklands, and in the course of the evening Keith inquired of the butler if Bradley was below, and on being told that he was, he said, "Give him a bottle of whisky."

I was much delighted this evening to notice a disposition on the part of all to contribute to each other's happiness. The countess, who was a proficient on the harp, favoured us with many sweet melodies, and sung with much pathos several of those enchanting Spanish ballads which breathe of love, adventure, and romance; whilst Henry, George, and Anne, bore their parts in the harmony, with glees performed in a style that would have done credit to a professional concert-room, with many of Dibdin's national war songs in praise of our army and navy, with which their father seemed much delighted.

In returning home, I congratulated myself in the probability and prospect of a happy change in the feelings of this naturally much favoured family, and determined, with the assistance of Mrs. G——, to accomplish, if possible, a reconciliation, and an affectionate and mutual understanding amongst them. We, therefore, after many serious and anxious consultations on the subject, came to the conclusion, that the whole mystery of the estrangement of this individually excellent family, arose from a want of that which is the chief bulwark of our constitution—the bond of social and civilized society, and the basis of that greatest of all blessings, domestic confidence and peace. This great want (religion) was the undoubted cause of those melancholy scenes which I had so often witnessed and deplored at Brooklands, and which it was now our determination, with prudence, to use every effort to remedy. It appeared at first a difficult task, but the cause was a great and a good one. I have already shown

sufficient of Colonel Keith's character to prove that, although an excellent man at heart, he never had had the advantage of a father's example on this all-important subject in his youth, and his unsettled life had prevented him reflecting much on his highest duties.

Anne used to attend church regularly, but many a bitter tear it caused her to shed, when her entreaties for her brothers to accompany her were refused and scoffed at.

"Why not get our father to join you?" they would say; "when you can manage that, we will not say what we may do."

The countess had, from some unknown cause, ceased to visit her priest so regularly as she had been wont to do; a circumstance, the reason for which I, however, had fully explained to me, from information I received, and which I meant to make my own use of when the opportunity should offer.

Our plans were considerably furthered from the circumstance of the countess's attendant, Annette, having become the wife of the coachman, he previously, by my advice, having exacted from her the promise that she would eschew the Roman Catholic faith, and regularly attend the parish church.

Lady Keith was not only an intellectual, but a most liberally-minded person, and always appeared pleased to encourage my wife in those conversations when their different creeds were introduced.

"Well," she said one day, "you have told me many things of which I never before saw the force, and I shall think much of them. I quite understand, that, if I were of the same religion as my husband, whom I sincerely and ardently love, it would give a more truthful, holy, and permanent tone to our affection."

In the mean time, we learned from Annette that her mistress had frequently requested her to read to her many of the Presbyterian hymns and paraphrases, and portions of our beautiful and sublime Episcopalian liturgy, with all of which she appeared to be previously familiar.

One day when Mrs. G—— had made her a morning visit, and was chatting with her on indifferent subjects, the servant came to announce the arrival of "Father Cullen," who, she said, was in the library. The countess in a moment

reddened up, and replied in her broken English—"Tell fadder Cullen that I will not see *him*; he is very much forward in coming to Brooklands—*very*."

Those reports, which I before alluded to, of the immoral character of this man, had reached the countess's ears from several quarters, but more particularly from Annette, who had received the information from her husband. She did not, however, require to be much more enlightened on the subject beyond what it afterwards appeared she had herself seen and experienced.

The clergyman of the parish, Mr. Perrin, a gentleman of good family, manners, and education, besides being a truly pious and devout man, was in the habit of making periodical visits to Brooklands, where he frequently remained and spent the day.

Upon one of those occasions, Colonel Keith, in the presence of the countess, expressed his regrets at his systematic absence from church, and observed—"That, if he could be accompanied by all his family, he should make it a rule that such would not be the case. Of course," he continued, "the countess, from *her* persuasion, could not be expected to accompany *me* to a Protestant church; but he would now endeavour more than he had done, to impress upon the young men the great importance of their not neglecting this duty."

Mr. Perrin frequently called after this conversation at Brooklands, and, I learned, had several private interviews with the countess.

At this time, a circumstance occurred which tended very much to bring about a happy consummation to all our anxious desires.

The countess in the course of her visits, which was her habit, to inquire into the circumstances, and to relieve the poor and distressed on the estate, caught an epidemic which at that time was raging in the country. The fever increased upon her daily, and at last her life was said to be in the greatest danger. Colonel Keith was in attendance upon her night and day, and, when he left her bedroom for a short time, it was only to give vent to the wildest burst of frantic anguish and despair. He tore his hair, made appeals to heaven that bordered on blasphemy, if not insanity, and appeared altogether inconsolable. It was a heart-rending sight to witness! Upon one of those occasions, Mr. Perrin

called and calmly reasoned with him, quoting portions of scripture testifying where he should place his hopes and trust, and vividly bringing before him the enormity of the sin of which he was guilty, in defying the power to save of an almighty and merciful Providence ; and in the kindest manner entreated him to become more composed, if 'twere only for the sake of her, to attend on whom, and to do the duty he desired, would require all his fortitude.

In a few days the fever took a favourable turn, and the doctor at last pronounced the countess out of danger ; but observed that the greatest care would be necessary that she should not be disturbed, or in any way excited. A week had not elapsed when she made the request that she might see Mr. Perrin when he next called, which he did in a few days afterwards.

The countess had recovered so far as to be enabled to leave her bed, and to sit pillowed up, for a part of the day, in her easy-chair. I had, with my wife, that day come across at her desire, as she had sent us word that she was now well enough to see us. Mr. Perrin had been in the room with the colonel for half an hour, when we received a message requesting us to join them.

On entering, we found the whole family assembled, and Colonel Keith's hand clasped in Henry's. Mr. Perrin, in his appeals to their judgment and affections, had succeeded in accomplishing all our wishes. Peace was now re-established amongst them on a *holy* and permanent basis.

Many years have now elapsed since this happy change of affairs at Brooklands took place.

Colonel Keith could never make up his mind to part with Henry, who remains at home, and is his father's constant companion in all his shooting and fishing excursions ; and Bradley still reigns supreme in the court-yard at Brooklands.

George is now become eminent in his profession, and already talks of *aspiring to the woolsack*.

A young cornet, the son of a general officer, has been lately their constant visiter, and report has it that little Anne is the attraction—at least she blushes deeply when his name is mentioned ; and the matter-of-fact manner, with the remarks of the countess, leave little to the imagination, compelling her sometimes to leave the room, when she observes—"Poor leetle thing ; she is in loove very mooch !"

Colonel Keith, from his now temperate and very guarded mode of living, and avoiding all excitement, has had no return of the effects of his wound for years. He is now become a most domestic character, and is never so happy as when surrounded by his family ; and it is a most gratifying sight to see him regularly every Sabbath enter the church with the countess and Anne on each arm, the two young men following.

The Forgers.

CHAPTER I.—DESPERATION AND CRIME.

I WILL endeavour to recall a reminiscence of my life in which it was again placed in peril, and, I believe, saved by the exercise of that cool determination of character for which I have often got *crédit*, perhaps undeservedly.

There is a certain class of customers of whom bankers are particularly wary to what extent they give credit. Such persons little dream how soon we come to know their circumstances, resources, mode of doing business, and private habits. I allude to those who, in reckless speculation, apparently carry on an extensive and lucrative business, who have had no pecuniary basis to start upon ; but who, from their perseverance, address, and consummate effrontery, manage to gain the confidence of honest and industrious plodding men, and who in the course of time they too often drag down to the level from which they themselves have sprung. Their wild, and sometimes fortunate speculations, often deceive for a time even the experienced, intelligent, and honourable trader—not so, however, the banker. *He*, from habit, knows pretty well, from the constant information he receives, the nature of their transactions, and has a shrewd idea how long they will *last*, as, like other prudent men, they never, or *cannot*, withdraw from business should they be so lucky as to realize a competency ; but, from their sanguine cupidity, rush madly on until the evil hour arrives, when they find that they have calculated beyond their host, and total annihilation is the consequence.

Such a character was Arthur Randall ; and it has often been a matter of wonder to me, where and how he acquired the disposition which marked his future career, as he was the son of a good, pious, and industrious man, and was edu-

ated in the office of one of my oldest friends, a merchant of the highest honour and integrity.

Arthur Randall, when I first knew him, was a young man in whom I felt disposed to place every confidence; he was introduced to me by his father, who brought him to the bank for the purpose of obtaining an advance for him on their joint note, to carry out a transaction which, on being explained to me, appeared feasible, legitimate, and likely to be attended with success. Arthur then informed me that he had commenced business on his own account, and that several monied friends had promised to back him; after some time I had reason to doubt this last assertion, but as he seemed active, sober, and kept then a respectable account, I felt for a time disposed to be charitable towards him, and to make allowance for certain little discrepancies in his statements, although I had heard that he had deviated from his regular business, and engaged in several speculations to an extent that his resources could not possibly warrant, and in connection with persons who did not bear characters the most reputable.

His plausible and insinuating manner, however, used often to overcome my better judgment; he was constantly asking for pecuniary favours from me, not only for himself but others. On one occasion I remonstrated with him, when he replied,—“I plead guilty, sir, to the charge; but you remember the anecdote of Sir Walter Raleigh, who, with all his genius, was constantly asking favours of his royal mistress. ‘When will you cease to be a beggar?’ said Queen Elizabeth one day to him. ‘When your majesty ceases to be generous,’ was the prompt reply of the wily courtier.”

As was my habit (when I had reason to do so) with young men beginning life, I warned him against the parties with whom he had associated, and the blindfold purchase of cargoes of grain on arrival, by bills of lading, as being a perilous trade; but his future transactions evinced no proof that he had followed or benefited by my advice. He had been some years in business, when his bill transactions with the bank began to assume a very formidable appearance, and in which I found it necessary to restrict him; the more so as several of his own acceptances had been (unknown to him) passed to us through other banks, which exposed to me the fact that he was pursuing a system as ruinous as it was discreditable. I therefore continued to curtail his discounts preparatory to

my intimating to him my determination of closing his account, and declining future business with him.

I was returning with my wife and family from a short tour up the Rhine, when I received letters on business which obliged me to hurry home. As they had several promised visits to make in London, I left them there, arranging that they should post it after me as far as Newcastle, where I had business in a week or two, and where I promised to meet them on their return. On arriving, I found that they had got the start of me by some hours ; they had ordered dinner, and were amusing me with their adventures on the road, the civility of some, and the extortion of other postboys, &c., when the waiter entered, and mentioned that two gentlemen, who had just arrived by the mail, were desirous to see me in another room. I replied "that there must be some mistake, as no one knew that I was in that quarter." A second message, however, induced me to step up-stairs, when on entering the room, to my great astonishment I was confronted with Arthur Randall, and one of his friends, whom he called his partner, named George Bland. They both appeared much excited, and, before uttering a word, the former locked the door inside, putting the key in his pocket, after which he placed a brace of pistols on the table. I observed, "Gentlemen, what am I to understand from this outrageous proceeding ? and how dare you, and for what reason do you attempt this intimidation upon me, and intrude upon my privacy ? Are you aware that, by touching that bell, I could alarm the house, and in one moment give you into custody ?"

"Yes," said Randall with the expression of a fiend ; "but if you attempted to do so your life would not be worth that moment's purchase."

Upon this I remarked, "I am ignorant of your object ; but if you expect to force me, by this course of proceeding, into a compliance with any demand or request you have to make, you will find me equally determined as yourselves to resist them."

"We are desperate men," observed Bland ; "our fortunes and very lives are in your hands, and, learning from your clerks that you were to be here to-day, we have followed you with the resolve that, unless you comply with our wishes, our lives, yours or both, may be the sacrifice."

"What is it that you require me to do ?" I said ; "and

why, if at all in reason, do you resort to such a violent mode of endeavouring to accomplish your purpose as the one you have adopted?"

Randall now became spokesman.

"There are three bills of ours amounting to nearly four thousand pounds, ostensibly drawn on and accepted by high-standing firms, and made payable at your office at K—, due to-morrow. *They are all forgeries!* and we must therefore retire them, or *perish*. We do not require to tell you the consequence of their being dishonoured, and for this we require your assistance. Are you disposed to give it to us or not? We pledge ourselves that, if these bills are renewed, we shall at whatever hazard pay them when due."

"I cannot," I returned, "think of holding converse with you on this or any subject, unless you approach me in a different spirit, show a due contrition for such outrageous conduct, and adopt that tone and manner which is befitting men of sense and business."

"Will you lend your aid to save us from certain destruction?" entreated Randall, who was now a little more composed.

This appeal to my feelings I could not resist, even with the knowledge of the risk I would run.

"First," I replied, "unlock that door, and remove from my sight those vile weapons, evidences of your madness and shame, ere I open my lips to you."

This being immediately done, and several remarks being made by them, of their mental suffering whilst these bills were in circulation, in an attempt at a palliation of their conduct, I said, "Now tell me (and let it be truth) your exact position, expectancies, and present resources." They then informed me of what I was partly already aware of (although not prepared for the confession of forgery), the incredible amount of deceit and fraud of which they had been guilty; but exhibited, to my satisfaction, an amount of unsaleable property which they had on hand, which, a little time being allowed, would enable them to convert into means sufficient to meet their engagements. I upon this gave them my promise that, on their meeting me at the bank on the following morning, and on their finding me *bonâ fide* names, and giving me security on their goods, I would endeavour at a short date to renew their bills, and prevent an

exposure of transactions, the enormity of which I had never known to be equalled during all my banking experience.

Randall now entreated, "that this interview might remain confidential," which on my part I engaged "should be strictly so," and thus terminated a scene which left an impression of sorrow at my heart, in the reflection that men bearing the characters of respectability, and with whom we had been in daily intercourse, could be guilty of acts of such desperate and deplorable wickedness.

On my again joining my family, I explained my long absence from them as I best could, and many years had elapsed ere I told them how nearly they had been made orphans and a widow.

When I reached the bank on the following morning, I found that both Randall and Bland had been waiting for me for some time: the former was about to revert to the meeting of the previous day, when I immediately interrupted him by saying that no explanation could in any way alter the impression that their atrocious crime had left on my mind, and requested that no allusion should then be made to it. I was now, I observed, prepared to fulfil the promise I had made to them, but it was done with the positive engagement on their parts that they should wind up their affairs, make a settlement with their creditors, and leave our part of the country, which they had so much disgraced, without loss of time, immediately on the bills to the bank, in lieu of their forgeries, being paid. The new names they brought me were those of small traders with whom they had done business for years, but as the collateral security was ample, I had less hesitation in closing with them, and in parting requested that I might never see their faces again. I never more saw Bland, but it was not destined that this was to be the case with Randall, as, some years after these transactions, I had occasion to meet him in a different character; meantime, I learned that they had compounded by a small composition with their creditors, to the ruin of many a poor unsuspecting honest man; upon which they left the district, an event which caused no regret from any who had ever had connection with them.

Some years had elapsed when Mrs. Richard Holmes, a widow lady who resided in the neighbourhood, in whom, and in whose family I had taken a great interest, paid me a

visit on the subject of her affairs. She had three daughters, sweet, intelligent, and affectionate girls, to each of whom their father had by will left about three thousand pounds, appointing me as sole trustee. I had sent them when young to a first-class boarding school in Yorkshire, where they received a most liberal education. On their return I was proud of my wards, and had every reason to be so. The change that had taken place in all the three was to me highly gratifying; the little country romps were now transformed into tall, handsome, and accomplished girls. Fanny, the eldest, about twenty (my wife's god-daughter), was my favourite if I had any. Her heart was one of intense feeling, and susceptible when excited of the warmest sympathies and passions of love for all those with whom she was in the habit of associating. She had the sweetest sunny smile I ever witnessed; it seemed to diffuse pleasure and good-humour to all around her, and when she indulged (which she frequently did) in her innocent flights of fun, I used to allege that I often heard Fanny's merry and silvery laugh before I entered the avenue. She continued to improve in personal charms: her style of beauty was peculiar. Her hair, which hung in long ringlets down her shoulders, was of a brilliant golden yellow; her complexion was so pure and delicate, that it appeared almost transparent. Her features were perfect, and her figure seemed as if it had been cast in a mould of the most exquisite and sylphlike delicacy. One day when dressed for dinner, and looking truly beautiful, I could not resist saying—"Fanny, dear, we shall hear of your taking wing one of these mornings, and flying to some aerial region where there is nothing but sunshine, innocence, and bliss."

"Thank you, dear Guardy," she laughingly returned; "but, if it is all the same to you, I should rather not, as I have yet to learn where I could fly to (that is to say, if I had the wings tacked on to my little shoulders), where I could be half so happy as I am at present."

In her manners, Fanny, particularly to strangers, was most prepossessing: she was courteous to all, being entirely divested of every thing approaching to affectation, whilst ladylike ease, elegance, at the same time childlike simplicity, pervaded her every word and action. The three sisters were much admired, and had many suitors, and consequently in a short

time Lucy and Mary made marriages that met my entire approbation, taking care as I always did, to see that their fortunes were settled upon themselves. It was the wonder of all our friends that Fanny should have remained single, left as she used to say, like "The last rose of summer blooming alone," but it did not remain long without an explanation, and it was on this subject that Mrs. Holmes had favoured me with the call I have previously alluded to.

After we had disposed of several little matters of business, she began by saying, that—"She wished to consult me on a subject upon which depended the future happiness of Fanny; who lately, she said, had evinced a disposition and determination of character, that she never had done before. Indeed, Mr. G——," she continued, "she for the last four weeks has been the cause of much distress to me."

"Indeed," I replied; "Mrs. Holmes, you *do* astonish me! I could not have supposed Fanny guilty of giving you, or any one, a moment's uneasiness; pray, inform me, what circumstance has been the means of effecting such a change in her character?"

"The fact is, a most eligible offer of marriage has been made to her by a gentleman of fortune, and of the highest respectability, which, contrary to my entreaties, she continues to reject, and that with a degree of determination and firmness I never thought she possessed. I told her that I should certainly see you on the subject, and she would fondly have accompanied me here this morning, but this I declined, wishing to consult you alone, as to the best course to pursue with her."

"Before I can give my opinion," I said, "please inform me who the gentleman is; how they became known to each other?" &c.

She replied—"That during a visit to her sister in L——shire last summer, they had been then for the first time introduced to Mr. Maxwell, a rich gentleman in extensive mercantile business, and a magistrate. He was captivated with Fanny's appearance and manners, and made immediate proposals to her, which she respectfully declined; he has renewed his addresses several times since, but she still continues obstinately to adhere to her determination."

"Have you ever," I inquired, "learned from Fanny what her objections are to Mr. Maxwell?"

"Never; and I don't believe she has any. Her conduct appears to me to arise solely from a spirit of contradiction, and a desire to annoy and distress me."

"I never could believe this possible in Fanny," I remarked; "but if she wished it, I could pay her a visit in the evening, and reason with her if I saw cause," upon which we parted.

Mrs. Holmes had not, however, left me more than half an hour, when their little pony phaeton drove to the door, out of which Fanny stepped, and hurriedly came into my room. She appeared greatly excited, and her careworn expression showed that she had had much mental suffering. On entering, she threw her arms about my neck, burst into tears, and continued for some time sobbing aloud.

"Come, come, Fanny," I said, "this will never do; you must compose yourself, and I will endeavour to do all I can to comfort you, and perhaps be the means of removing, at all events ameliorating, your sufferings."

"Dear Mr. G——," she sobbed, "you have been always more than a father to me, and I have come to you in this emergency as the only friend I have in the world from whom I can hope for assistance and relief."

"And I *will* be your friend, Fanny, so tell me unreservedly all your woes."

"Mamma has been with you, I know, and doubtless has informed you the cause of our disagreements, and which have nigh broke my heart. She insists, Mr. G——, on my marrying a person I can never love—indeed, I cannot! You used to give me credit for discrimination of character; in this case my observation has been more than usually alive. Mr. Maxwell is a man, believe me Mr. G——, unsuited to me in every way. I have often told him it was impossible I could ever be his wife; but, encouraged by mamma, who seems infatuated regarding him, he still continues to harass me with his unpleasing and most offensive attentions."

I told her to keep her mind easy, that I should write and learn concerning this Mr. Maxwell, and that I had no doubt that, if he was an honourable man, and the true state of things represented to him, he would forbear prosecuting a suit which was so much against her inclinations.

Having thus far relieved her mind, I said, "Now, ere we part, I have a question to put to you, which I am sure you will answer me candidly, and in the most perfect confidence

on my part,—pray who is this favoured youth upon whom you have placed your affections, as I have little doubt, from the manner in which you have treated the addresses of this Mr. Maxwell, that there is *some* one who has been more fortunate !”

At this question she blushed deeply, and having after some time recovered her composure, she replied—“My dear Mr. G——, I have long blamed myself for not having made a confidant of you before, and am too glad that you have broached the subject which affords me the opportunity of opening my heart to you, which I have so long ardently desired, and to tell you that if I ever marry, it must be to one to whom I am pledged by all that’s divine and human !”

This she uttered with an energy and a determined force of expression that quite astonished me.

I remarked, “then I hope the young man is worthy of you, Fanny, dear, and that you have well considered the great importance of the step you have taken ; pray now inform me who this lucky stripling is ; do I know him ?”

“Oh, yes, sir, I think you do ; atleast you must know his family—it is George Elliot.”

“What, the young barrister ; the son of my old friend ? I am much pleased to hear of it, I have heard the best accounts of him, and that he is a very rising young man in his profession.”

At this remark Fanny’s eyes again filled with tears, and she exclaimed—“Oh, yes ; and he is so kind, and so good, and so affectionate, and”—

“That will do, Fanny,” I returned, interrupting her ; “pray, how long have you been known to each other ?”

“A very long time,” she replied, “even from our very childhood, and up to this time he has been all that my heart could desire ; and you are the first one to whom we have trusted the secret of our attachment.”

“We must now endeavour to bring your mother to our views.”

“It is of no use, I fear, trying it,” she replied ; “she will listen to no reason on the subject—she is inexorable.”

“However,” I remarked, “I shall try what I can do,” and after having given me a warm embrace, and overwhelmed me with thanks and blessings, she took her departure, and it was a relief to me when I again saw her countenance lit up

with one of her enchanting smiles as she drove off, evidently in a different state of mind to that she was in when she first made her appearance.

I now determined to follow this affair up; to prove the friend of little Fanny as far as was in my power, and to try by every means to get her relieved from the difficulty in which she was placed, if possible.

On seeing Mrs. Holmes, I found her most obstinate and resolute; no argument I could use seemed to have any effect upon her, and I left her without any satisfactory result.

By that night's post I wrote to our solicitor at Manchester, where Mr. Maxwell's business was, his residence being several miles in the country, narrating to him the facts, and requesting him to see Mr. Maxwell, and arrange the matters with him, which I had little doubt would be easily accomplished; and as I imagined that he would not need to have the story promulgated, he had better not allow *my* name to be mixed up in the matter, but to make it appear as if he had received his instructions from the young lady herself. The letter I received in reply was far from satisfactory; Mr. Maxwell referred my solicitor to his attorney, by whom he was informed that he could not possibly relinquish the engagement Mrs. Holmes had entered into with him in regard to her daughter, whose fortune was to have been settled upon him, unless an adequate compensation was made to him.

CHAPTER II.—VILLANY UNVEILED AND PUNISHED.

ON receiving this precious communication, I resolved to go to Manchester, and settle the matter personally, without the knowledge of either Fanny or her mother. When I arrived, I immediately saw my solicitor, and requested him to arrange a meeting with all the parties on the following morning, which was fixed to take place at the office of Mr. Maxwell's attorney. On attending, he informed me "that a particular engagement would prevent Mr. Maxwell from joining us for half an hour, but in the meantime he was instructed by his client to say that no compromise could possibly be entertained, unless one thousand pounds were paid him; that Mrs. Holmes by her correspondence, had clearly made herself liable in the

affair, and that the non-fulfilment of it would be attended by most unpleasant and discreditable consequences to Mr. Maxwell."

I replied—"That this attempt to force a young lady into a marriage against her inclinations, was contrary to all gentlemanly and manly feeling; besides, being yet under age, I, as her guardian, would never consent to part with a penny of her fortune under any circumstances, unless it was to be settled upon herself." Whilst engaged in this discussion, a knock was heard at the door, and he remarked—"But here is Mr. Maxwell, and you will learn from himself more fully what his intentions are."

When he entered, my amazement and disgust can be more easily imagined than told when we stood face to face. He became deadly pale—his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth, and he shivered like an aspen leaf.

The other two gentlemen stared in astonishment, not knowing what to make of the scene; for myself I fixed my eyes sternly and steadfastly upon the man. It was Arthur Randall that stood before me. After several minutes had elapsed, I broke the silence by remarking—"I think this affair will be more satisfactorily arranged between Mr. Maxwell and myself *alone*; and, if you will permit us, we will retire for that purpose."

When shown to a private room and the door closed, he attempted to utter some incoherent words, on which I immediately interrupted him.

"So, sir," I sternly observed, "not content with having escaped the punishment for the crimes of which you have been already guilty, you would add another to them of a most heinous character. You have attempted my life—you have been guilty of fraud, falsehood, and deceit, without end, not excepting even the capital crime of extensive forgery, and now would have destroyed the peace of an innocent and respectable family, had I not mercifully been fortunately made the instrument to prevent it. To gain the daughter, or rather her fortune, you have managed to deceive and work upon the feelings of a weak and unsuspecting woman, her mother. What have you to say for yourself?"

Like all cowards he began to shed tears, praying and entreating that I would not expose him, as he had become a reformed man, and from his good conduct had won the re-

spect of the community where he now resided ; and declared that he would comply with any request I might make to him.

"On those conditions," I replied, "I will once more relieve you from apprehension ; and as a preliminary step, must desire you to deliver me up every letter and paper you possess, in your correspondence with this family, whom, in the most dastardly manner you would have ruined by your connexion with them ; and also, I must have from you a legal undertaking and bond, relieving them from all claims and consequences that might have arisen, had you succeeded in your hellish plot."

He rather hesitatingly said—"I agree to do so, but must first consult with my solicitor."

"No, sir," I determinedly returned, "I shall have no delay, or admit of any reservation whatever ; if you hesitate, you know the consequence."

"Then I shall send the documents you require to your hotel, in the course of the evening."

"I will not trust you," I rejoined ; "I must have them now ere we part."

"What—now, sir?"

"Yes, this very moment. I know that they are in the possession of your attorney." Upon which I rang the bell, and the two solicitors made their appearance, when I addressed them by saying—"That Mr. Maxwell had agreed to my terms in the settlement of this matter, and that I required the delivery of every document in connection with it ; and gave instructions that a valid instrument, relieving Mrs. Holmes and her family from all further annoyance on the part of Mr. Maxwell, should be prepared before three o'clock, to enable me to return home this evening ; and requested my solicitor to look to my interests, when I would call again and meet him at that hour to have the deed executed."

When I returned as arranged, I found all prepared for me ; the letters and papers, with all the correspondence with Mrs. Holmes, Maxwell now handed to me in a parcel, when I said—"Now, in presence of these gentlemen, you solemnly pledge yourself that this packet contains all and every document whatever that you possessed in this affair?" to which he answered in the affirmative ; and the deed, which had been previously revised by my solicitor, was then regularly

signed, sealed, witnessed, and delivered to me ; after which I seized an opportunity to take Randall aside, and caution him now, since he appeared to have regained a position in society, against reverting to his former courses ; and in this instance I heard that he had taken my advice, having afterwards learned that he had succeeded in business, married, and become the respectable head of a family.

The distance of a long journey seldom appeared to me so short as this one did on my return home ; my thoughts were occupied on the pleasure I should afford dear Fanny in having rescued her from the snares of Randall, with the reconciliation that would follow with her mother on my communicating to her the particulars of my journey.

When I reached home I lost no time in driving out to Mrs. Holmes's house the following day, when I informed her —“ That I had been to Manchester and seen Mr. Maxwell, which I conceived myself, as the guardian of Fanny, in duty bound to do, from what she had informed me.”

“ Well,” she said, “ Mr. G——, I am sure you found him all that I represented, a most respectable and excellent gentleman.”

“ So much the contrary,” I answered, “ that I would rather have seen dear Fanny laid in her grave than married to such a man.”

“ What,” she exclaimed, “ Mr. G——, can have induced you to form such an opinion of a gentleman of whom I have received the highest possible character ? You must have been biassed in your notion of him by some one who is envious of his respectability, and jealous of his prosperity.”

“ So far from that,” I replied, “ I required nothing but *my own* experience of him for years to come to the conclusion I have done, and I now tell you that I have, through Providence, been the means of preventing your family from being disgraced by its connection with a villain of the deepest dye.”

“ What ! do you mean to say that Mr. Maxwell has ”——

“ Yes,” I rejoined, interrupting her, “ he has been guilty of almost every crime in the ‘Newgate Calendar.’” This remark produced a flood of tears, a retreat to the sofa, and a threatening of a fit of hysterics, which I should have felt some difficulty in managing, had not Fanny, on hearing a scream, rushed into the room. Mrs. Holmes, however, became very soon composed and rational when I informed

her, after having obtained a promise of secrecy, the outlines of Arthur Randall's history.

"But, oh! Mr. G——," she exclaimed, "what *shall* I do if he has in his possession letters and documents he obtained from me, that must bind me to the fulfilment of the engagement I made with him."

"I have had some little thought for you in that respect," I answered, "as I took the precaution of obtaining from him all these papers, &c., which you have been so imprudent as from time to time to give him, as also an undertaking, relinquishing all claims, and absolving you from every cause of anxiety, from the thoughts of your having nearly sacrificed poor Fanny; and I have now the pleasure of handing them to you, and I darsay that you will find none a wanting."

A sort of *serio-comic* scene followed these remarks. Mrs. Holmes, with alternate smiles and tears, was profuse in her thanks and blessings, whilst Fanny commenced to dance about the room, clapping her little hands, and making no end of fantastic evolutions; turning, wheeling about, and singing at the pitch of her voice the last favourite opera air, like a furiously mad *prima donna* and an insane *ballet dancer* combined. When this little ebullition came to a termination (want of breath having compelled her to desist), I said—"Now, as you will run less risk of frightening the horses with your pranks, and as *my* time is precious, make haste, get your bonnet and shawl, and come into town with me, as I want to have a little serious conversation with you."

My request was no sooner made than accomplished, as she almost instantly appeared equipped for the road.

In the course of our drive I learned from her, after some little circumlocution, that she and her "dear George" had been engaged to be married for nearly two years, which they had determined to keep as a secret until he was fairly established in good practice in his profession; that her mamma, ever since her introduction to Maxwell, would never permit his visits, or hear his name mentioned; that they had, however, managed to meet regularly, by appointments made at the house of her old nurse, who resided in the town; and they had now determined that, if her mamma continued obstinate (much as it would distress her), to get married without her consent. She informed me that Mr. Elliot had been in the country for some weeks, and they had an appointment to

meet at their usual place of assignation that forenoon at twelve o'clock, to arrange when and how they should elope, for which she was quite prepared at any moment.

Astonished to find such firmness and determination in a female heart, particularly where I had hitherto seen nothing but retiring modesty and mildness, I returned—"Well, Fanny, we must endeavour to prevent such an imprudent step as this, if possible; and, as I have already overcome the principal obstacle in the way, you had better leave the rest for me to manage; therefore return home as quickly as you can, and I will keep *your* appointment with Mr. George Elliot, who will doubtless communicate with you the result of our meeting.

This she did not seem at all to relish, and observed—"Dear Mr. G——, but the poor fellow will be *so* frightened when he sees you; he will immediately think that our plot has been discovered, and that you are come to expose and punish him."

"Do not be alarmed," I replied; "I will soon set his mind at ease."

"You will not be harsh with him?"

"Certainly not."

"Nor look very angry or fierce at him?"

"Oh, no!"

"Nor say it was all his fault?"

"No, no, no!"

"Well, good-bye for the present; *remember*, you have promised to be kind to him."

"Yes—yes; adieu! you will most probably hear from me in the course of the evening," and off she drove.

At the hour appointed, I was at Mrs. Ord's, the nurse's cottage, where I found that Mr. George Elliot had been waiting for some time. Both he and Mrs. Ord seemed confounded and embarrassed when I entered; he was at first much confused, but how different was the appearance of his agitation compared with that of Randall. In my interview with *him*, it was as the transient alarm for the safety of one he loved to adoration; of innocence, virtue, and manly courage, contrasted with the convicted guilt and deceit of a dastard and a coward.

He seemed unable to speak for some minutes; at last, in a feeble tone of voice he asked me, "If all was well with Miss Fanny Holmes?"

I answered that "She never was better, and that I had only parted from her within the last hour."

"Thank God for this!" he said; "I am now prepared for any communication you have to make to me, as I have no doubt but that this meeting is arranged at the request of her mother."

I said, "That I had a most important communication to make to him, but certainly not at the request or even with the knowledge of Mrs. Holmes." I then proceeded to inform him the particulars of my journey to Manchester, and how I had managed to defeat the machinations of the person named Maxwell, at which he stared with astonishment and delight; moreover, I told him I had been informed by Fanny of their long attachment, and as I knew both their natures, dispositions, and characters, it was not my intention to throw any obstacles in the way of their marriage; on the contrary, my opinion was that the sooner it took place the better, as "Hope deferred sickeneth the heart," and I would be responsible that the consent of Mrs. Holmes would be obtained; but it would be also necessary that I should be satisfied that all *his* friends approved of the connection.

He assured me that he had had the full consent and approval of all his family in paying his addresses to Miss Holmes, and he was sure there would be no impediment thrown in the way on their parts. Her fortune, I told him, had accumulated considerably in my hands, but beyond a small portion of it, with the yearly interest necessary to start them in the world, I must settle the capital on his future wife and their family, should they be so blessed; to all which he cordially acceded, informing me at the same time that his father had already made a provision for him in the event of his marriage, and that he had no doubt from these resources, his devotion to business, and economy, that they would have ample means to meet all their wants for years to come.

This explanation being finished, he seized me by both hands, overwhelmed me with the warmest expressions of gratitude, and the heavy debt of obligation he had incurred to me, and we arranged to meet in the evening at Mrs. Holmes's house. In the mean time, I told him that I should see his father, and request him to join us, that we might arrange all business preliminaries.

I was with Mrs. Holmes an hour before the time appointed,

and having informed her the particulars from first to last of Fanny's engagement, and all that had passed, the respectability of the connection, and the unquestionable character of the young man, she became at once quite acquiescent and enthusiastic; conscious, I imagine, of having done Fanny so much injustice, she was desirous to make to her all the amends in her power. By the time, therefore, that the Messrs. Elliot appeared, Mrs. Holmes had put on her best smiles, with her best cap.

After Mr. Elliot, sen., and I had settled the terms of the marriage contract, we called the young people into the room, informing them that the rest of the business now remained with themselves. George pleaded very hard that an early day might be fixed for their marriage; Mrs. Holmes was of opinion that at least six months should be allowed to pass ere the necessary preparations could be made; but I remarked (with a sly look at Fanny, which she returned with a smiling wry face, and shake of her head), that as she had made *considerable* preparations *already* for a rather speedy accomplishment of their wishes, I did not see the necessity of protracting the ceremony longer than a month.

George upon this made the modest remark, that as they had waited so long already, and as there was no impediment in the way, he thought, with submission, "that a fortnight would be long enough. We will not be enabled *just yet* to have a large establishment, but will for a time live in hope for success in my profession, with love and contentment, ever thinking of the sage remark of Socrates—'Small as my house is, I wish I could fill it with friends.'"

"What does Miss Holmes say to all this?" asked Mr. Elliot, senior.

Fanny, covered with blushes and with an averted head, timidly replied—"That she would agree to any thing that dear George wished, knowing that he would not ask her to do what was improper or unkind to any one."

"Well, well," all exclaimed, "so let it be!" and the remainder of a very happy evening was spent in the interchange of congratulations and hearty wishes for the future felicity and prosperity of the young couple.

The marriage of George Elliot and Fanny Holmes took place accordingly as arranged, and a finer pair were seldom seen. George's manly countenance, and tall, handsome

figure, were in beautiful keeping with Fanny's truly angelic form and face.

If nothing else does, it makes me feel that I am *indeed* now an old man, when I visit this happy pair, and see their table surrounded with a sweet family.

George Elliot is now at the head of his profession, with the enjoyment also of a government appointment, which enables them, although still most prudent, to live in good style. Fanny makes the best and most affectionate of wives; and when I last saw her, her increased years and matronly appearance, I thought, added to her beauty.

The Widow's Son.

CHAPTER I.—PURITAN FAMILY.

I WILL endeavour to relate rather a harrowing tale in connection with the family of a dear old friend, which, from extraordinary circumstances would have been involved in total ruin but for the dauntless and energetic exertions, the prudence, perseverance, and sagacity of a simple country girl.

In the whole course of my professional life, there was no occurrence that I ever met with that struck so home to my heart, and for a time so completely upset me, as the one I am about to relate.

Thomas Newall, with his father before him, had for a long term of years been the tenants of a large tract of land on the property of Colonel Keith. They were, perhaps, the most extensive wool-growers in the country, and their breed of sheep was of such a superior quality for the purpose, and so well-known, that, when they had occasion to reduce their stock, there were none ever brought to the market that commanded better prices, and there was no one whose name stood higher at "Falkirk Tryst" for honesty and truth than Tom Newall. His word was his bond, and if he fixed his price in the morning, let the fluctuations of the market be ever so favourable (which is often the case), he never swerved from it during the day.

Thomas Newall was selected, from his high character, to hold many of the county and parochial offices, being a justice of the peace, treasurer to the savings club, an elder of the kirk, &c., &c. He was also most exemplary in his private life, as any one passing his house punctually at nine o'clock in the morning or evening, would be certain to hear family worship solemnized. His father had been exactly such a man as himself, and his grandfather, as indicated on the moss-

covered tombstone in the "kirkyard," was shot as one of the leaders in the ranks of the covenanters at the battle of "Bothwell Brig."

Tom Newall married early in life the daughter of one of his neighbours, and had only two children, a boy and a girl; the former, when he attained about the age of ten or twelve, he took with him wherever he went, and never lost an opportunity of pointing out to him the dangers and temptations with which he would be assailed in passing through life; how to avoid and guard against them, and the certain ruin that must inevitably fall on the keeping company with evil and wicked associates, and the benefits which arise from sustaining a strict adherence to purity of character, with the dignity of virtue and truth, which, in a short time, invariably proves—"that honesty is the best policy."

All these most salutary advices were, however, inculcated in such a frigid and stern manner, and so constantly repeated and enforced, that in time young Tom heard them as matters of course, feeling an ungenial restraint under such rigid discipline, and ever envying lads of his own age, who appeared so joyous and happy in their sports, whilst he was controlled and restricted in every amusement suited to his years.

Mrs. Newall in this respect was quite a contrast to her husband; she was passionately fond of her son, and often by over-indulgence, in a great measure, undid what his father flattered himself he had indelibly imprinted on the tablets of his young heart; and, if he were guilty of the most trifling indiscretion, he either punished him severely, or would not be on speaking terms with him for days.

Upon one occasion he met with some young friends who detained him one evening an hour beyond the time of family worship; this was an offence in the eyes of Thomas Newall that could never be overlooked or scarcely forgiven. Tom was in consequence severely punished, and his father would not countenance him for weeks.

Many a true heart that would have come back like a dove to the ark after its first transgression, has been frightened beyond all recall by the savage charity of an unforgiving spirit.

When young Tom Newall had attained the age of about eighteen, typhus fever, which had been raging in the country,

carried off his father. His funeral was attended by a large concourse of his friends, and the regret at the loss which would be sustained at his death by the community where he resided was general and sincere.

A week or two after the funeral, Mrs. Newall called on me at the bank, to solicit my advice as to what course she should take in consequence of the bereavement she had met with ; she talked of throwing up the lease of the farm, as she thought it was far too serious an undertaking for her to attempt to carry on ; this I strongly dissuaded her against, telling her that the rent was very low, and the lease in other respects a most favourable one ; besides, her son in a year or two would be quite fit to take the management of her affairs. Her daughter was also now a fine promising girl of sixteen, and besides, her late husband had saved a considerable sum of money, which he had placed in our hands in the bank, together with his will, which secured to her liferent, and which would be found sufficient to keep her at all events, whatever might happen, from absolute destitution.

On the result of their mother's interview with me being communicated to Tom and his sister, they, after a long consultation, determined to keep on the farm.

"I don't see any reason," said the former, "why I should not, by a little experience, be as able as my father was to manage it ; I am young and healthy, able and willing to work, and I am sure that Mary will do all in her power to keep things straight at home, whilst I am superintending matters out of doors. You know I cannot be much at a loss, as my father was always instructing me in the most minute details of the business."

Mrs. Newall again called, and told me all the arrangements that they had made, and that her confidence in Tom was so great that she meant to leave the management of every thing to him, as she had no doubt that he would prove a worthy representative of his father.

"Yes," I replied, "Mrs. Newall, he appears at present a fine steady lad, but it does not suit, under any circumstances, to put too much in the power of youth ; many a fine blossom has been blighted from this mistake ; young men, up to a certain age, live in a world of romance ; they are unsuspecting in their natures—governed almost entirely from impulse—indiscriminately generous in their favours—and liberal in

their feelings, often attributing even wicked actions to amiable motives ; they in consequence, unless put upon their guard, become the prey of every charlatan that may cross their path, who, to suit their purposes, make all efforts (in which they are often too successful) to seduce them from their virtuous course to the rugged road of sin and iniquity."

Mrs. Newall promised, at parting with me, that she would keep the reins as much as possible in her own hands, until Tom had learned sufficient from experience that he might be altogether trusted ; but Mrs. Newall, from her attachment to her boy, and from being of an easy and acquiescing temper, would rather overlook a fault or mistake in Tom, or submit to even a loss that might have been averted by a little exertion, than she would blame *him*, or be troubled to put herself about to correct his errors ; the consequence was, that before he was twenty years of age he had his mother under such perfect control, that he could in every respect manage her as he thought fit. I first discovered this from a change in their mode of doing business at the bank. All the drafts on their account, which used to be previously signed by Mrs. Newall herself, now bore the signature of Tom at her request ; besides, the sales of wool which his father made were always settled by cash ; whereas bills, now often at a long date, were taken in payment, and frequently from parties whose affairs we knew were not in a very flourishing state. Tom, however, appeared very industrious, was never absent from the market, and things seemed to prosper pretty fairly with the Newalls, until one winter they lost many of their lambing ewes from the severity of the season, and in the spring a large number died of the "rot." This crippled them considerably in their resources, as they now could not spare any withdrawing from their stock, to enable them that year to attend Falkirk fair, from the sales at which they had always calculated, and been enabled to meet, their rent. However, if Tom had been unlucky in his department, Mary and his mother had nearly made up for it by their industry at home, as the produce of their dairy, poultry, &c., had been fully doubled ; and they looked very proud when they one day came together in their holiday dresses to the bank, and paid in to the general account the amount of their earnings in case of need, in anticipation of the rent falling due. I complimented them both, and particularly Mary, who had now grown up a

very pretty and interesting young person ; and although in appearance extremely diffident and timid, still I could perceive that there was no want of mind and nerve, should occasion require them ever to be brought into play ; and she was not without her admirers, as a young farmer, who resided about a mile or two from them, had been for a long period their constant visiter, and had several times hinted to Mary that he was well to do in the world, but that a bachelor's life was neither an economical nor a happy one ; he told her that he was robbed by his servants at all hands, and no one knew how much he required a companion, and such a one as Mary : although, however, she loved him with all her heart, she said she could not leave her mother *just at present*.

George Halliday heard her with patience, as he well knew her motives, and appreciated them ; feeling in this, as in every thing else, that she was guided by a spirit of principle and duty, which no self-denial, or personal consideration of any sort, would cause her to swerve from. He, however, always continued to make his appearance in the evenings, and frequently was in time to join them in family worship, a system that the widow had regularly practised since her husband's death, although Tom had lately several times hinted—"That it was often very inconvenient for him to hurry home from his business, sometimes only half finished, to be in time for this duty."

Mary modestly replied on one of these occasions—"That she did not think the business would thrive the worse for asking the blessing of God, with a prayer offered up to him in reverence and humility to assist and direct them ; besides, Tom, dear," she said, "it is the means of bringing you home in good time, as I cannot see that much profitable business can be done after nine o'clock."

He replied—"I suppose George Halliday has been putting some of that nonsense into your head," and there the subject dropped ; as Mary had lately remarked, that Tom had evinced an impatience of temper, and in all matters concerning himself or his proceedings could not brook argument, or any appeal either to his affections or judgment. This gave Mary many an anxious thought, as she had also noticed, for some time past, peculiarities in his style of conversation unbecoming in manliness and modesty. He now talked of acquaintances he had made, which she knew could not benefit him

in business, and one, in particular, who seemed to be his constant companion.

Tom (when I happened to see him in his visits to the bank) always appeared to me to be modest and respectable. I generally asked him concerning his mother and sister, and how his affairs were getting on; and his reply invariably was—"That their concerns were doing pretty well, and in such a state that they had not so much reason to complain as many of their neighbours."

However, shortly after this my good opinion of him was considerably shaken from a circumstance that occurred, and of which he little dreamt that I was an accidental and unwilling witness.

On my returning from K—— one evening about nine o'clock, I stopped at an inn which was called the "Halfway House," to change horses; it was in the middle of summer, and unusually hot. I had a considerable time to wait, and, whilst seated in my carriage, the windows of the principal room in the house being open, I heard sounds of loud and boisterous conversation, evidently proceeding from persons far gone in intoxication. Quarrelling seemed to be going on amongst the party, and I was much shocked to hear the voice of Tom Newall as the most clamorous and violent; he seemed to be backed in his cause by a man for whom I had the greatest antipathy, knowing him to be a sordid, mean, and worthless scoundrel. He was rather an extensive horse-dealer, and, from his trafficking with many of the principal gentlemen of the county in his calling, he sometimes got access to their tables. Still, Dick Harper, as he was called, was shunned by all the well-disposed in his own station of life; no persons desiring to have any intercourse with him except strictly in business, when he was often found to be a necessary evil. His own house, a cottage on the high turnpike road, was the constant scene of gambling and dissipation of every description; he had an irresistible way of his own, by which he could bewitch and fascinate, particularly the unwary and unsuspecting young, and a manner of apparent unreserved heartiness in his friendships, with a seeming ingenuousness and liberality, that threw all off their guard who at first came in contact with him; but I knew him to be a man in reality of the very worst possible propensities, wicked and unprincipled, and ever ready to plan or join in any scheme

of knavery, however desperate ; and this was the person with whom I discovered that Tom Newall was on the most intimate footing. The entire gang of them came out of the house just as I was starting, apparently for the purpose of deciding a bet concerning some feat of strength or agility, and I had then an opportunity of seeing the whole party, all of whom I knew to be questionable characters.

I requested the clerk, the next time that Tom Newall called at the bank in the way of his business, to show him into my room ; and a few days had not elapsed when he made his appearance. After having requested him to shut the door, I told him of the scene I had witnessed, and the company I had seen him in, which had struck me with wonder and distress ; and for the respect I bore for the memory of his father, and the interest I felt for his mother and sister, I warned him, if he had any regard for his own character, hopes of success in the world, or feeling for those who were nearest and dearest to him—who leaned upon him for protection and support, and whom he was bound by all the ties of duty and affection to comfort and cherish—to eschew, without a moment's loss of time, all those associates and their habits, with which it was evident that he had got himself entangled.

He replied—"That the meeting I had witnessed was entirely accidental, and that a number of the persons whose company I saw him in, were returning the same road, and generally accompanied him home on his way from the markets, and they were then so far on their progress."

I said no more at the time, but simply told him again what would be the consequence of his persisting in such a course ; and that the mere fact of his being seen in such society was quite sufficient to blast him in the eyes of all respectable people, and it was likely, as he now ought to have reached the years of discretion, and capable of judging and acting for himself, that I would not again obtrude my counsel upon him. He left me with a promise that he would be more guarded in future ; but his manner was dogged, sullen, and morose, and I feared his habits were too confirmed, and that he had not sufficient strength of mind to resist the temptations that were cast in his way, and the snares that were laid to entrap him.

In the mean time, poor Mary and his mother had for a

length of time been suffering from his irregularities; they had tried every argument, and used all their endeavours, by every means in their power to attract him to home, but it was without avail; he now had entirely given up joining them in their family-worship. His hours for returning home were uncertain; always late, and frequently he never made his appearance at all, and when he did, he generally was muddled, stupefied, and silly, incapable of rational conversation, and without taking any seeming interest in the business of the farm.

Mary knew that remonstrance was in vain, and was even afraid to speak much to him on any serious subject; if at any time she did so, he was seized with a fit of passion, proving that his temper had become altogether ungovernable; they could, therefore, do nothing but deplore, weep, and pray for him.

The rent season was again approaching, and a consultation was held amongst them how it was to be raised, when they reluctantly determined to sell five score of their best wethers, which, it was arranged, Tom should dispose of on the next market-day; and, with two or three shepherds, he started with them for this purpose early in the morning, Mary entreating him to be sure and return home with the money immediately he had accomplished the sale, giving also two or three quiet hints to the shepherds, to see that he did not get into company. He sold the sheep very early in the day for two hundred and ten pounds, and was hurrying home when, at the end of the town, he met Dick Harper, and told him what he had been about, mentioning that he was so far on his way home with the cash, being past bank hours.

"That's all right," rejoined Harper; "but I wish, having done this, that you will come round and join us in a glass and a rubber, as I expect Aird and Jem Livingstone over. I will not keep you late, as I am going in the mail to-night to the great horse fair at Barnett."

Tom said—"He would not promise," but at the time had made up his mind to go, which Harper well knew. When he reached the farm, he gave the money to Mary, who deposited it in the large old iron-bound oaken chest, and then observed that he was going across the glen for an hour or two, but would return early. Mary had been accustomed to so many broken promises of this description, that she had

little faith in such assurances. On this occasion, however, she used more than her wonted entreaties to induce him to remain at home; the weather was uncertain, she remarked, having all the appearance and threatenings of a severe thunderstorm; his mother joined in her importunities, but all was without avail, and off he set with his plaid over his arm. When he reached Dick Harper's cottage, he found Aird and Livingstone had already arrived, and been plying the whisky-bottle, they said, for some time; he was not long in filling his glass also, and they commenced the night's carousal in good earnest. Cards were soon introduced, but Tom does not appear to have lost much, the hard drinking being preferred, which was continued until ten o'clock at night, when all of a sudden Tom became quite insensible, and fell into a dead sleep; and, after some whispering and interchange of several mysterious signs with his man-servant (a person of infamous character), Harper, with his assistance, carried him to bed, where we shall leave him for the present.

In about an hour after this the party broke up. The two men, Aird and Livingstone, left for their different homes; and Harper, with a small portmanteau in his hand, proceeded to pick up the mail-coach at the inn where it changed horses, about a mile from his cottage, and where it generally passed about half an hour after midnight, and there we shall leave him also, and return to Mrs. Newall's farm.

CHAPTER II.—THE MIDNIGHT BURGLAR.

THE anticipated thunderstorm had burst forth in all its violence, and Mary Newall and her mother were sitting about half past eleven in the greatest anxiety concerning Tom, who had not returned according to his promise.

Their fears increased as the night advanced; they had excited themselves into the impression that something dreadful must have happened to him, and if he was out in the frightful tempest, perhaps intoxicated, he might have lost his way, or been struck with the lightning in passing through the forest. Mrs. Newall had offered up a short prayer for his safety, when Mary gave her a sudden look of alarm and terror.

"What *is* the matter?" inquired her mother with great fear and dread.

"Hush!" she whispered, "did you not hear that noise?"

"No—how, and from whence?"

"'Tis at the door—listen!" said Mary, cautiously rising to her feet, and appearing as if inspired by some firm resolve; they at the same moment both turned their eyes in that direction, and saw the latch moved, as if warily, from the outside. Mary now sprung forward, and, with almost unnatural strength, drove in an additional old rusty bolt which had not been used for years, and almost immediately a loud knocking commenced.

"Who are you, and what do you want?" cried Mary.

A gruff voice from without, answered—"I am a friend of your brother's, and want shelter from the storm."

"We cannot possibly admit you," she rejoined, "unless we know your name, and reasons for being in this by-path at such an untimely hour."

"Open the door instantly," was the retort; "or I shall smash it in shivers."

Mary, to satisfy herself, cautiously withdrew a small aperture of the window-shutter, which she almost instantly closed again and barricaded, having, by the aid of a vivid flash of lightning, seen, fully and clearly developed, the figure of a man wrapped in a dark cloak, and his features concealed by a black crape being drawn over his whole face.

"Be calm, collected, and composed, dearest mother, as much as you can," she whispered, in a paroxysm of emotion, "'tis our only hope of safety," and she commenced to place boxes, tables, chairs, &c., against the door. A succession of heavy blows, now apparently made by some ponderous missile, like the large stump of a tree, had nearly forced it from its hinges, when Mary, with a resolute and determined look, in a whisper as distinct and awful as if it had been wafted from heaven or the grave, gasped out—"Father's gun, dear mother—father's gun—haste! haste! whilst I keep watch—'tis charged, I know." Mrs. Newall, with nervous dread, scrambled to the shelf where the gun was placed, trembling in every limb, and gave it to Mary, who handled and cocked it as if she had been used to do so all her life. Another desperate blow was made at the door, which, but for the heavy furniture placed against it, would have driven it in. An

attempt was now made to force the window, when Mary called with a loud voice—"That she was armed, and would fire unless they (whoever they were) immediately departed." This was answered by a still more violent stroke against the casement, which smashed the glass, and had nearly splintered the shutter. Upon this she pointed the gun in the direction from which the last blow came, and fired. A heavy fall and shriek proved that the shot had taken effect, but regardless of this she again commenced loading with the greatest coolness. "Give me the powder-flask and shot," she said; "there may be two or three of them," she gasped, breathing quickly, "for what we know. Let me see, Tom puts the powder in the gun first—so;—does he not, mother! there;—and then the wadding—there;—then the shot, with more wads, ramming all well down (suiting the action to the words); now for the powder in the pan, and I shall be again ready for them." Her mother during this last operation had fainted, and Mary's attention was drawn to this new source of alarm; she, however, soon brought her to her senses.

There were no further attacks, but they continued on the watch for the remainder of the night, and long after day-break, when they at last opened the door to the well-known and welcome summons of George Halliday.

We will now return to Tom Newall, whom we left in a state of inebriation, and asleep in Dick Harper's bed. When he awoke, he had some trouble to collect his thoughts, but by degrees recalled to his remembrance the proceedings of the previous day and evening, but could not at all understand how he had become so intoxicated, as he had been in the habit of often taking double the quantity that he had drank that evening with impunity. On ringing for the servant, he informed him that his master had left by the mail the night before for Barnett, upon which he immediately dressed, and hastened to the farm.

George Halliday, having given information to the authorities of the outrage committed on Mrs. Newall's house, Tom, when he reached, was astonished to find it filled by a crowd of people, consisting of myself as a magistrate, the procurator-fiscal, the sheriff's officers, with George Halliday, and a large concourse of the neighbours; he appeared to great disadvantage from the previous night's debauch; and on being asked

by the procurator-fiscal where he had spent the night, and with whom ; he, after some hesitation, informed them that he had been with a party at Richard Harper's, and that the storm prevented him from returning home. We were engaged in examining the witnesses when he entered.

George had described and directed the attention of the authorities to the state he found the place in when he came in the morning, the door and the window being shattered, and a ploughshare, which evidently had been used to effect this purpose, was found lying adjacent, and a considerable quantity of blood near it.

Tom was now asked if he had informed any one of his having deposited the cash he received from the sale of the sheep in the charge of his mother and sister at the farm ; and he replied that—"He had told no one except Richard Harper, to whom he had casually mentioned it ; but he could not possibly be implicated in the matter, as he had left for Barnett by the night mail."

On the examination of Mary, when they reached that part of the evidence where it appeared that she had displayed so much presence of mind, magnanimity, and courage, a murmur of applause passed from one end of the room to the other, at which George Halliday was visibly affected.

The investigation was adjourned until the following day, when Livingstone and Aird were examined, and in both their cases an *alibi* was proved.

Harper did not return for some weeks ; he accounted for his long absence from having been induced to attend several races, and he mentioned also that he had been very ill, from having caught cold, of which he had every appearance. He was, of course, examined on the subject of the attack upon Mrs. Newall's farm, but could throw no additional light upon it, and here the investigation stopped ; but there were certain misgivings which remained impressed on the minds of many, and which were never uttered except by a very few, who did so with caution and prudence.

Several years had passed after this occurrence, and during the interval Tom Newall seemed to have experienced a sense of his former irregularities and folly, as he now, except on market nights, was seldom or never absent from the farm on an evening.

Mrs. Newall was now getting old, and incapable of that

exertion and devoted attention to her department of the business of the farm in which she had always been so very active. Mary had therefore the whole burden of the work upon her own shoulders, in which she was never in arrears; and, if she chanced to have any extraordinary labour and toil, she was amply recompensed for all by a visit from George Halliday in the evening, who continued more devoted to her than ever.

During this period, when the war was at its hottest, the mode of transacting business had undergone a complete change; cash payments, which had been the custom for a long period on the purchase of all agricultural produce, had now given place to the almost constant system of settlement by bills at three or four months' date; the consequence was, that we were inundated with these documents for discount. It was a very unsatisfactory change for us, as, although it promoted the circulation more of our one-pound notes, it opened a door to speculation, and led on those to embark in business who were ignorant of it, and who had no basis or connection except what they derived from the facilities which were for a period afforded them of raising this fictitious capital. The want of all resources in such persons we well knew; but being introduced, and often guaranteed, by many of our best customers, we hesitated the less in placing such acceptances to the credit of the different accounts. The business and interchange of property under this system certainly increased, but it was questionable whether the same healthy tone and advantages existed now which had done before it was introduced; we knew it could not last, and therefore, after a time, became more and more cautious as to the description of paper we negotiated. Tom Newall did a good deal in this way with us, and more, I thought, than the business and produce of his farm warranted.

On questioning him as to this one day, he replied—"That he himself had become a purchaser of wool, which, from his acquaintance with the article, he could do to great and profitable advantage." I said no more to him beyond simply remarking that I thought he should keep his business within the bounds of his farm and capital. He shortly afterwards called upon me with a letter, purporting to be signed by his mother and sister, instructing us to honour his drafts for the sum lying in our hands, and left by his father to

secure to his mother her annuity. I at once declined this, telling him that I would on no account allow this sum to be applied in any way except that by which his father by his settlement intended it, and requested that he would send his mother and sister to me, that I might explain to them my motives for refusing to comply with their wishes.

Tom said in reply, that he had heavy bills falling due immediately, and, without this or some other assistance, that he should be placed in a sad dilemma for want of the means to meet them; and that he had fully calculated on receiving a loan of this sum for a short time, to help him out of his difficulties.

I remarked to him that, whether he were rich or poor, it would make no difference whatever in my determination not to tamper with this sum; and, in about ten days after this interview, Mrs. and Miss Newall called at the bank to lodge a portion of their earnings to the credit of their account. I then observed, that I hoped they did not take amiss my refusal to comply with their wishes contained in their joint letter to me, but that I acted upon a principle that nothing had or ever would induce me to swerve from. Mary and her mother on hearing this, exchanged an expressive look, and their faces became the colour of crimson. After some little time had elapsed, when the former seemed to be considering what reply to make, during which they both became very pale, she timidly remarked, that she believed Tom had many engagements to meet, and she had little doubt but that he was short of means, and she knew that he had tried every way of raising money to save his credit.

At this period our good old king ever maintained that the prosperity of his vast dominions, both at home and abroad, depended entirely on the industry and perseverance of our commercial community, but more particularly on the confidence that existed betwixt our merchant princes, whose names for honour and integrity passed current over the whole globe; and the consequent extension and increase of our trade caused the envy and wonder of the world, so that any illegitimate, felonious, or criminal attempt to interrupt or impede the course of our mercantile affairs, was punished with the utmost rigour of the law.

The crime of forgery stood first upon this list; and no

appeal to the feelings of the king, or entreaties made, however powerful and influential (as in the case of Doctor Dodd), would ever persuade him to pardon this offence. Obstinate in temper to a degree, in *other* respects he might in some instances be brought by argument to relent; but in the case of forgery he was inflexible, determined, and inexorable. DEATH—certain death, without the hope of pardon—was on conviction the never-failing penalty. However, even in the face of this awful punishment, the crime existed to a fearful extent; hundreds of forgeries were negotiated by *us* (of course, in ignorance at the time), but the falsification we frequently discovered during their currency. *They were the best paid bills.*

Tom Newall had a great many transactions with the firm of Benson, Powell, & Mearns, one of the most respectable and leading houses in the wool trade in Liverpool, and I was pleased to see that he had cultivated such a connection. One day he made his appearance with a batch of their acceptances, amounting to about fourteen hundred pounds; he said he did not require at that time the *whole* amount, but requested that we would allow him to draw against them to the extent of one half until they arrived at maturity. They were made payable as usual in London; and on being remitted in the course of our business to our agents for presentation, the answer was, from the bankers where they were domiciled, that they had no instructions from Messrs. Benson, Powell, & Mearns concerning them, which was the more extraordinary, as they had had advice from them that morning, regarding several of their other engagements. The bills were accordingly returned to us dishonoured; and on writing to the house, their reply was, that they knew nothing of such obligations, and repudiated the idea of ever having accepted bills of that tenor and date.

I immediately despatched a messenger to Tom Newall, with the request that he would come and speak to me without loss of time, as, although the bills were not drawn but simply indorsed by him, several names preceding his, and amongst others that of Richard Harper, it therefore occurred to me that in all probability he had been made the dupe of a deep and villanous combination of his knavish associates to defraud, and who, I afterwards discovered, had been carrying on this game of iniquity for upwards of two years.

When Newall came, he, as I suspected, told me that he had received the bills from Harper, who requested him, as a favour, to pass them through his account—that he believed them to be *bonâ fide*, having done many others for him of a similar description, not only with us but with other banks.

I saw the whole story in a moment; an extensive system of forgery had been carried on by a gang of abandoned wretches. With Harper at their head, they had managed always to provide for the bills when due, until at last suspicion appears to have been excited; credit and confidence in them were gone, and they eventually became unable to meet the heavy amount just about coming round. Harper having left home, no one knew where, two days previously, confirmed my conviction that he had been the prime mover in this villainous traffic.

The public prosecutor immediately took up the case, and warrants were issued for the apprehension of Harper and his associates; amongst the rest, Tom Newall. I would have had him to remain and undergo the examination; as, although implicated to a certain extent, I knew he had not taken a prominent part, or perhaps even participated, in the produce of this system of iniquity. It was, therefore, with much regret I heard that he also had fled, and was traced to Ireland. The procurator-fiscal went personally to apprehend him. He was found in a low public-house near Killarney; he seemed when taken to be resigned, and almost thankful that it was so, and (as I had obtained the promise confidentially of the officer to do so) two good chances were afforded him to effect his escape, had he been so disposed, he having been left alone in the postchaise when changing horses, on one occasion for twenty minutes; he was, therefore, brought home and lodged in the county jail on a charge of forgery. Harper was taken in the Isle of Man, whilst living in luxury in the principal hotel in Douglas under a false name, and Aird and Livingstone were also apprehended in the neighbourhood of Bristol.

It was a most trying scene for me, the first interview I had with the mother and sister of this unfortunate young man after his apprehension; the former seemed quite crushed, whilst Mary, on the contrary, appeared as if inspired with the idea that the fate of her brother was in *her* hands, and that it was through her resolute, prudent, and undaunted efforts that his life was to be saved.

The culprits were examined before a full bench of magistrates; and although, in my evidence, I tried all I could to speak in favour of Newall, still he was committed with the rest of them for trial.

Mary saw her brother as often as the rules of the prison would admit of, and administered to him, in pure sincerity and truth, those consolations which, when all the world is adverse, can alone afford a balm to the soul. Newall felt the admonitions of his sister in their full force, and now regretted from the most inner recesses of his heart and soul, that he had disregarded and neglected to follow the counsel and instructions that had been inculcated in his youth by his good and pious father.

Preparations were now necessary to be made for his defence at the trial. Mary never rested night or day in her strenuous exertions to procure evidence in his favour, testimonials of his own personal and their family character, instructing counsel, &c. The lawyers were of opinion that he could not be convicted from the proofs laid before them of the forgery: there was, however, a great fear that the uttering of the bills, knowing them to be forged, could not be got over. I saw him in prison the night before the trial, and entreated him to withhold nothing from me, but inform me the whole extent of his transactions with the other prisoners. His story was exactly the same as that he told me when I first sent for him on the subject; and, from the simple and candid manner in which he described to me his connection with the villain Harper, and the means he took to deceive and entice him into all his atrocious schemes, the enormity of which he neither seemed to understand, nor did he appear to participate in the plunder arising from them, all which convinced me that he was morally, if not entirely, innocent of the crimes with which he was charged.

The trial created a great sensation over the whole country, the parties accused being all so well known, and the interest in favour of Newall, with the sympathy for his mother and sister, was universal.

On the morning it was to take place, Mary Newall, accompanied by George Halliday, who had attended her constantly in all her wanderings, called to tell me the progress she had made, and to request that I would procure them seats in the court near to the prisoner and counsel. She was neatly

dressed in her best Sunday clothes, and although a slight hectic flush might have been perceived on her cheek, and a sharp and anxious expression in her eye, still she was calm and collected, and seemed neither daunted nor dismayed; but in her determination not to leave unperformed one act her judgment dictated, that could in any manner or way, which lay within her limited power, tend to save her brother and her family from disgrace.

Mary had kept her wretched and heart-broken mother in ignorance of all that was going on from the time of Tom's apprehension. The poor old woman appeared as if a suspension of sensibility, and a total prostration of mental energy, had taken possession of her. On the eventful day a kind friend and neighbour got her, at Mary's request, to remain with her; indeed, in every thing that was proposed she was gentle, unresisting, and passive.

When I entered the court, which was crowded to excess, I found Mary, with George Halliday by her side, in deep conversation with her brother's counsel, who seemed to be listening to her with the greatest attention. The judges had just taken their seats, and a deep silence prevailed when the prisoners were placed at the bar; one fond and ineffable look and a tender kiss were exchanged between Mary and her brother, and the former seated herself behind him, and coolly took out her writing materials, with which she made copious notes during the trial.

All the prisoners pleaded not guilty. It did not appear from the evidence that Aird and Livingstone had been engaged in the manufacture of the forged bills, nor could their connection with the uttering be brought home to them. It was, however, clearly proved that they had a guilty knowledge of the transactions, and had shared in their produce, from the circumstance of two twenty-pound notes of our own, of which we had the numbers, being traced from them. They were therefore absolved from the capital offence.

Against Harper the evidence was clear and complete; his possession of an unusual amount of cash in our notes, on the very day that Newall had discounted the bills with us, and the knowledge as to whom he had paid them, which were found to be identical with those issued to Tom Newall when compared with our books. Besides, scraps of paper being found in his parlour, on which he had been practising the

signature of Benson, Powell, & Mearns, and the evidence of his servant-man, who had seen him repeatedly engaged in this employment, and who on one occasion had called him into the room and asked him if he could distinguish the real from the counterfeit—all of which, with his previously infamous character, left little doubt in the minds of the jury.

With regard to Newall, the crown counsel seemed to strain every nerve to convict him also of the capital crime. He brought forward nearly a score of witnesses to prove the close intimacy that had existed between him and Harper, and argued that it was almost morally impossible but that he must have been aware of Harper's infamous proceedings, and an abettor in all his crimes. In my evidence, I spoke out plainly my sentiments as to my firm belief in his innocence, and was steady in my assertions that my full impression was that he was made a tool of by the others, to prove which many of his intimate friends were brought forward—amongst the number was George Halliday, who swore that the prisoner had frequently remarked to him that his acquaintance with Harper was only that of an occasional boon companion; that he had rendered him frequent pecuniary assistance, but that his connection with him had never extended beyond that; and that he had no knowledge whatever of his business or money transactions; and he believed the discounting of the forged bills, of which he was in entire ignorance as to their nature and character, and with regard to which Harper had made use of all his artifice and craft to accomplish his purpose, were the only dealings that he ever had with him. Mary also came forward to prove the respectability of his family, and gave instances in which Harper had led him astray in their presence; and this concluded the exculpatory evidence.

The presiding judge summed up at great length. He said that, in regard to Newall, although there did not appear to be any direct evidence as to his having been guilty of the forgery, still his close and constant intimacy with Harper, of whose conviction there could be no doubt, and the circumstance of his uttering the bills, went far, in his mind, to implicate him, at all events to a certain extent, as a participator in the capital crime.

The jury retired, and, after an absence of about an hour,

again took their places. When they entered the court, a solemn silence prevailed: the suspense in the interval had been most painful, but none seemed to bear it with greater fortitude than poor Mary, who, during all the time, had been employed reading over her notes and conversing with George Halliday. I had obtained a seat near them, and used every endeavour to console and encourage her. At last the foreman of the jury rose, and in reply to the questions put to them by the court, gave as their verdict that they had found Richard Harper and Thomas Newall guilty of forgery, and George Livingstone and Gilbert Aird guilty of a knowledge and concealment of the crime, and sharing in its produce, although not actual perpetrators.

The court adjudged Aird and Livingstone to fourteen years' transportation; then after a solemn pause, and having put on the black cap, the presiding judge pronounced the dreadful sentence of *death* upon Richard Harper and Thomas Newall.

The whole audience were appalled and thunderstruck at the unexpected and awful fate awarded to Newall.

Mary heard it with the greatest firmness and composure. There was no shrieking, fainting, or even tears shed, but her face became deadly pale; and the only other indication of intense feeling that I could discover, was when I seized her by both hands and found them as cold as ice.

"Keep a good heart, my dear girl," I said; "we shall yet endeavour to save him."

"Yes, sir," she energetically and firmly replied, "with God's assistance, 'who can temper the storm to the shorn lamb,' and who will strengthen and invigorate me, *I will save him.*"

A general interest in favour of Tom Newall seemed to pervade the whole country.

CHAPTER III.—THE ROYAL PARDON.

It was now within fourteen days of that fixed for the execution; both Harper and Newall, who were placed in different cells, seemed quite resigned to their fate. I saw the latter frequently, in company with the sheriff; and one

evening when I was leaving the prison, the chaplain accosted me with a message from Harper, that he wanted to see me on a most urgent matter. On going to him, I found in this extraordinary short time he had become a totally changed man. The unwearied efforts of the worthy clergyman had, after much labour, brought him to a sense of his awful situation.

When I entered his cell he held out his now emaciated hand to me, and at once said that he had sent for me, knowing that certain death was so near him, to make a full confession of all his crimes, and particularly those against Thomas Newall; on hearing which, I requested that the clergyman, sheriff, governor, and clerk of the prison, might be present to take notes, and vouch for what he might disclose.

When they had all assembled, he told us that, from the beginning to the end of his crimes and atrocities, Thomas Newall was as innocent as a babe; that he was ignorant of all their proceedings, and was merely made use of, which, from the simplicity of his nature, they had no difficulty in doing, to pass their forgeries, of which he never had the most distant suspicion that they were not *bonà fide* bills. That, so far from his receiving any of the produce of them, it was the reverse, as he was considerably in his debt for borrowed cash.

He also confessed that it was he who attacked the Newalls' farm-house, knowing that it was unprotected, in the hope of obtaining the cash he knew to be there; which he purposely sent Tom to leave in charge of his mother and sister, and whom he drugged with a strong opiate, to prevent his interrupting him. That affair, he said, had nearly cost him his life, as part of the shot which was fired lodged in his left shoulder, from which he for weeks endured the greatest agony in a London hospital, and from it he still continued to suffer.

"'Twas I," he said, "who forged the letter, appearing to have been written by Mrs. and Miss Newall, for the purpose of getting hold of the family's funds, and which, by good-luck, you, sir (addressing me), resisted paying, and which I had persuaded young Newall to present, assuring him that, if he lent it to me, I should faithfully return it to him in the following week, which I never intended; in fact," he continued, "for the last six years my life has been one of an incessant system of roguery, fraud, and deceit. Aird and

Livingstone, when they see this document, will make a similar confession, I have no doubt."

This declaration was regularly engrossed, word for word, as he uttered it, and was signed by Harper, myself as a magistrate, the sheriff, the clergyman, and by the governor of the jail, and his secretary.

Having performed this act, Harper said that his mind was much relieved, and, having taken leave of him, we proceeded to the cells of Aird and Livingstone, from whom, after some little difficulty and argument, we received still stronger confirmation of Harper's confession, absolving Tom Newall from all connection whatever in their crimes; these other two documents were also regularly drawn, signed, and witnessed by the same parties. Meanwhile, poor Mary had been unwearied in her exertions, having scarcely given herself a few hours' rest at any time either for sleep or refreshment; she had got a petition drawn up and signed by almost all the nobility, gentry, and farmers for ten miles round, recommending her brother's pardon; she had also seen every member of the jury, who promised to add their names at the last of all, which would make the petition the more effective; but when I waited upon them with the confessions of the different convicts, they all, without hesitation, agreed to forward a special and distinct document from themselves to the Home Office, for presentation to the king, stating their convictions, from what had transpired since the trial of Newall, of his entire innocence, and to this I also procured the signature of the presiding judge.

Mary having obtained an interview, by an appeal to her feelings, with the good old Duchess of B——, she gave her a strong recommendatory letter to her intimate friend, Lady C——, who held an appointment which brought her in close and constant intercourse with the king and queen. With this letter and her petition, she determined to proceed to London, and personally present them, and no persuasion of mine could prevent her carrying out her designs.

I had also resolved to see the Secretary of State, Lord S——, with whom I had a slight acquaintance, and whose goodness of heart, I felt assured, would lead him immediately (on proper representation) to take an interest in the case; and having arranged my documents, and obtained a letter of introduction from the lord-lieutenant of the county, I

started that night for London, and Mary followed me on the succeeding night.

I lost no time, on my arrival, in obtaining an interview with Lord S—— at the Home Office, who perused the different documents with much attention, which seemed to gratify him, and he promised to lay them without loss of time before the king.

When Mary reached London, she found her way to the house of a Mr. Peter Goldie, a brother of her mother's, an ivory-turner, who resided in Clerkenwell; he had been for many years the beadle of the parish, and from step to step had raised himself in the world, through industry, economy, and perseverance, to a position which, in his own estimation, few, from similar circumstances and opportunities, had ever attained. Holding several parochial offices, he had frequent applications from his neighbours for his favour and patronage, which caused him to assume an importance and demeanour which was not always conceded to the extent he could have desired. He received his niece (who did not arrive until late) with a mixture of pomposity and kindness; having informed him that she had business of the most vital importance which would make it necessary for her to visit the palace, he was surprised and gratified, and having had a consultation with him as to her best course to pursue, and having apprised her that the court were at that time residing at Kew, she determined to start by daybreak the following morning with her papers.

It was a beautiful morning; she reached Kew about six o'clock, and was admitted within the gates on showing her letter to Lady C——. She had walked a considerable distance through those lovely and matchless gardens, when she found herself entering a magnificent and extensive lawn, and was gazing around, at a loss what direction to take, when she descried an elderly gentleman in the distance, alone, engaged in poking and turning over some new-cut hay with his cane; he was very plainly dressed—he wore a blue broad-skirted coat, with a scarlet collar and large yellow buttons; his breeches, which reached a little below the knees, were of white cashmere, and met by a pair of long black boots, fitted tightly to the leg; his hat was slightly cocked, shovel-shaped, and turned up with a military cockade on its side; on his left breast was a small star; he was stout and well-formed, but stooped slightly from the shoulders.

When Mary approached him he was standing with his back to her. "Gude-mornin', sir," she said, on which he turned sharply round, looking rather alarmed, and in a suppressed voice exclaimed—

"What, what?"

"Here's a fine day for a stook, sir," said Mary very modestly (concluding from the gentleman's appearance that he must be a farmer.)

"Ah, ah! girl from Scotland—strange dialect—but not difficult to understand."

He spoke very quickly, and a great portion of his remarks were short, pithy, and made aside to himself, as if thinking aloud.

"Who do you want here?" he inquired rather tartly.

"If you please, sir," replied Mary with a low curtsy, "I have a letter from a kenne'd freend of my Lady C—— to deliver to her, and it wad be very obleegin', and a great charity, if you could direct me where I could find her."

"Court ladies don't get up at this hour," he replied sharply; "but give it to me—give it to me—I will see that she gets it."

"I thank you kindly, sir," she returned, "but I maun deliver it into her ain han'; however, I'm no the less behawden to you for your ceevil offer."

"Scotch caution," remarked the elderly gentleman. (Aside,) "I admire them for it; 'tis often a safeguard against fraud. Where do you come from, my girl?" he inquired (aloud.)

"I come frae D——shire, please, sir!" she replied.

"D——shire! Ah! ah! a fine pastoral and grazing county; famous for black cattle and white clover (aside.) When did you come to London, and where are you residing now?" (to Mary.)

"Please, sir, I cam' late last night, and am lodgin' wi' my uncle, ane Goldie in the ivory-turnin' line, in Clerkenwell."

"How did you find your way here, this morning?"

"I walked out, sir," replied Mary; "we are used to walking, sir, in our country."

"Scotch women very strong and healthy—fine ruddy complexions; Pitt says their children make by far the best sailors and soldiers, (aside.) Ha! ha! ha!"

"What do you want with Lady C——?" he inquired,

"Indeed, sir," replied Mary, "it is naething less than a

matter of life and death; and the gude auld leddy, the Duchess of B——, has written to her to ask that she will assist me to present a petition to his Gracious Majesty the King, who has never yet failed to listen in mercy to the prayer, in a just cause, of the humblest of his subjects."

"Neither will he—neither will he," he replied. "Where is your petition? Give it to me—give it to me. I shall see that it is safely delivered to the king."

Mary handed him the petition, which he immediately opened and began to peruse; and, as he proceeded, his interest in it seemed to increase, and, having finished, he folded it up and put it in his pocket.

"Ay! ay!" he said (aside,) "this is an important appendix to the papers S—— left with me last night. The judge, jury, lord-lieutenant of the county, three hundred and thirty of the nobility and gentry, with the confession of the convicts themselves, is irresistible. Newall's sentence must be cancelled; if ever there was a case for royal consideration and clemency it is this. But the villain Harper *must* suffer; he was enough to ruin the morals of the youth of a whole country. And have you come all the distance from D——shire alone?" inquired the old gentleman of Mary, "in the endeavour to save your brother?"

"Indeed I have, sir; and, had it been ten times as far, it would have cost me no consideration when engaged in such a cause, with a blessed and ever-watchful Providence to direct my steps."

"Strong-minded girl—good girl—Scotch people high principled—firm in resolve—and very religious." (Aside.)

"And may I depend on you, sir," said Mary after a pause, "giving the petition to the king?"

"Yes! yes!" he replied; and she was turning to go in search of Lady C—— when he cried, "Stop! stop!" at this moment a young officer joined them, and in approaching with hat in hand, remarked—

"Your majesty is an example to all your subjects for early rising."

"Howard," he replied, "you will instruct my secretary to see that the free pardon of Thomas Newall, condemned in Scotland for forgery, is sent to town to the Home Office by express, without a moment's loss of time."

"Your majesty's commands shall be immediately attended

to," returned the officer, who made a humble obeisance and hurried towards the palace.

Mary, with surprise, reverence, and awe, had dropped on her knees at the king's feet, when our truly benign and gracious monarch condescendingly took her by the hand and raised her up, saying—"Heavy dew has fallen last night, and the damp grass is not good for young girls. There, now—go, go, that will do—I cannot bear scenes," (as poor Mary was making an effort to speak)—"Your brother is absolved from all suspicion that may have been attached to him of guilt for the crime for which he has been unfortunately condemned, and will leave the prison in a few days with a pure and unsullied name;" and he walked towards the palace, leaving Mary for several minutes transfixed to the spot in a maze of wonder and delight. Her most sanguine hopes had been gratified—she had seen and spoke to the king her own *very* self, and her brother's life was saved. She felt as if it all had been a dream—'twas too much for even *her* strong nerves—her head seemed to reel, and her limbs and eyes fail her; and, she would have sunk to the ground had not a violent flood of tears come to her relief. When she recovered from this burst of emotion, on turning round she found that one of the royal servants was waiting, having been sent to conduct her to the palace.

Her interview with Lady C—— was a most gratifying one, not only from the condescension and kindness of her reception, but from a testimonial of a more substantial nature, the united gift contributed by all the ladies in waiting; and a costly diamond ring presented by her majesty the queen, with a holograph note giving her the highest praise for the devotion she had evinced in the cause of her brother, and for the perseverance, energy, and firmness she had displayed in having, under Providence, *rescued* him from such a disgraceful and untimely end.

After having partaken of some refreshment, she was, by command of her Majesty, conveyed to town in one of the royal carriages, and it can be more easily imagined than expressed the rapture of Peter Goldie when he opened the door (in reply to the unusual aristocratic knock), to see his niece handed out of the carriage by the servants in their royal liveries. This auspicious event completed his triumph of importance in the neighbourhood: the distinguished honour

paid to his house established the question of his dignity for life.

I was waiting with much anxiety at the Home Office long before the hour of its opening, and, when permitted an interview with Lord S——, he informed me of Mary's visit to Kew—her interviews with the king and queen, and the success that had attended them; and I received from his hands, with no common feeling of gratification, the precious document, concerning which thousands were enduring the greatest solicitude and suspense. Without loss of time I drove to my hotel, partook of a hurried repast, and, placing myself in a post-chaise with four horses, started for the north, directing the postboy first to call at Mr. Goldie's in Clerkenwell.

There I found Mary with her mind in a far different tone than when we last parted; but, in joy as in grief, she exhibited the same composure that she had ever done during all the momentous test of her sisterly affection, piety, and moral courage. She petitioned hard to be allowed to accompany me; but I saw that she was already exhausted, and unfit for the journey, as I meant to make it; besides, I was desirous to have a day or two's start to enable me to have Tom out of prison ere her return.

If any thing more was necessary to confirm Peter Goldie's consequence, the *arrival* of another carriage with four horses at his door placed the question beyond the vestige of a doubt: it was almost too much for him to bear—what would the neighbours now think? And many of the oldest inhabitants were heard to say, that such an event as a royal carriage having been seen in Clerkenwell had not occurred since the days of the merry Nell Gwynne.

The grass was assuredly not allowed to grow under the horses' feet. I came down at a slapping pace the whole way, having a fresh relay every six or seven miles. I drove direct to the prison door, which I reached just about midnight. The jailer told me that George Halliday had been in attendance on the convict almost the whole day, and was with him then. I sent for the governor and chaplain, to whom having exhibited the free pardon, at which they displayed much pleasure, I requested them to accompany me to poor Newall's cell.

We found George Halliday sitting with him on the side of his pallet, reading encouraging portions of scripture to him;

he looked a little surprised when we entered, but seemed to attribute our visit to nothing particular, and after some little time the chaplain commenced talking to him in a consolatory strain. He mentioned that the term of our pilgrimage here, even although extended beyond the limit allowed to man, was after all but a shadow, and he inquired whether or not, young as he was, he would wish to linger on, and spin out, if he were so favoured, the short tenor of life, perhaps, that might under Providence be vouchsafed to him.

He answered, "That now he had no such desire; he felt his soul so calm and composed, and was sure that it would never be in a better state to appear before his Maker, having the most perfect confidence of salvation through his precious Redeemer."

"But, Thomas," I said, "would you not wish to live a few years longer for the sakes of your dear mother and sister?"

"Ah! indeed," he returned, "you *have* now, Mr. G.—, touched my most tender chord—Yes! if I were blessed with ten lifetimes they should all have been devoted to comfort, cherish, and make amends to my beloved mother and my dear dear Mary for all they have done and suffered for me—the extent of which I never knew until I was brought here. The harm I have done them, and the heartbreaks that I have been the means of causing them, no sacrifice of mine, I imagine, would be sufficient to efface."

"Great influence is using for you," said the chaplain, "and we have had reason to-day to be more sanguine of success."

"I am sorry," said Newall, "that I have been giving so much trouble to so many; but I can only, in return, offer up my prayers to such kind friends, and in sincerity and truth express my heartfelt gratitude."

"The lord-lieutenant, the jury, and the judge, have all petitioned for you; besides, an address has been sent in your favour to the king, signed by many hundreds."

"It might perhaps be better," he observed, "that I was not buoyed up with hopes that may prove unavailing, and thereby turn my mind from more serious considerations."

"But, Thomas," I said with imprudent precipitancy, "I *will* buoy you up, and I have reason to do so—it is unjust to conceal the truth longer from you. His gracious majesty has been pleased to grant you a free pardon, and more—has absolved you from all participation in the crime for which

you have been condemned, and would have suffered. Behold ! I exclaimed, producing the document, you are no longer a prisoner."

I shall never forget the effect that this communication had upon poor Tom Newall ; his face became wan and pale as death—his eyes glassy—his lip quivered—his whole frame seemed for a moment paralyzed, and he fell with his face on the ground. The doctor, being instantly sent for, directed him to be removed from the cell, and his irons struck off without loss of time, and he was laid upon the governor's bed.

Ten minutes had elapsed, and every description of restorative had been used, but still he showed no symptoms of returning animation ; he remained immoveable, the pulsation of the heart had ceased, and life seemed altogether suspended ; bottles of hot water were applied to his feet, with warm flannels to his chest, and strong salts held to his nose. "There is a slight perspiration bursting out in his skin, we could not have a more favourable symptom," said the doctor ; "continue the warm applications."

At last, after the lapse of about twenty minutes, he opened his eyes wildly, and looked around in wonder.

"My dear boy," I said (after a pause), "how do you feel ?"

"Better—better," he replied almost in a whisper ; "where am I ? Yes, yes ! I now remember all, mother—dearest mother, and Mary—darling Mary !" and he burst into a flood of tears.

"That will do," said the doctor, "'tis all right with him now, let him have some refreshment."

A jelly was procured, and that, with a little weak brandy and water, produced an immediate reaction in his nervous system, and he gradually recovered. When I saw him drop into a sweet sleep, with George Halliday beside him, I retired, and, as I felt much fatigued with my journey and the excitement of the affecting scene I had witnessed, I found that rest for myself was also necessary ; the governor remarking this, offered me a bed, which I thankfully accepted, and where I got a few hours' refreshing sleep.

When I arose in the morning I found the poor unfortunate, with George Halliday, up and dressed. A vague rumour had got wind that a reprieve had been received for Newall, and, in consequence, many hundred people were assembled in front of the prison to ascertain the truth.

After some time they became very noisy and clamorous, when I suggested to the governor that the crowd had better be informed of the fact; a large placard was therefore prepared and hung out from one of the most conspicuous of the front windows, bearing the words—

“A FREE PARDON HAS BEEN GRANTED TO THOMAS NEWALL.”

This announcement was received with the greatest acclamations, cheers and shouts of applause; and the people, who throughout had been conscious of his innocence would, had they not been restrained, have given vent to their feelings, insisting on the ringing of bells.

Having prepared his poor mother for his reception, we in a few hours took a favourable opportunity to have him stealthily removed from the prison, and conveyed home, and the meeting with her, as may be supposed, was of a most affecting nature.

On the following day when Mary returned, as was expected in consequence of the rumour having got abroad of her meritorious and noble conduct, her interviews with the king and queen, &c., a concourse of friends and admirers had assembled to receive her on the arrival of the coach, when she was welcomed with the hearty congratulations, acclamations, and cheers of the multitude. George Halliday conducted her home.

The meeting of Mary and Tom would have melted the most hardened heart—not a word was uttered by either, but they bounded into each other's arms, where they remained bathed in tears and sobbing aloud, locked in a fond and loving embrace for many minutes.

At last, when they were enabled to speak, Tom in a voice faltering with emotion, and in the exuberance of his passion, exclaimed—

“Mary! dearest Mary! by what means can I ever repay you? How blinded have I been to the value of the precious jewel I possessed in you! that life which you have saved shall now be devoted in contributing to your happiness and that of our mother in this world, and following your example in all things as my best preparation for the next.”

“Dearest Tom,” she replied, “my heart is too full at present to express to you the extent of my feelings. I could

have done nothing of myself without that aid of an ever kind and merciful Providence, by which I have been throughout guided and directed in this great struggle of tribulation and affection. Let us therefore return thanks to Him, and Him alone, who has brought this great trouble which hung over our family to such a happy termination, and pray to Him for strength of mind, that we may eschew all the vanities of the world, and devote the remainder of our lives to His service.

Many months had not elapsed, when George Halliday again renewed the subject of marriage to Mary Newall; the objection which had before existed was now removed, as Tom and George had agreed to work their farms in conjunction for their mutual interest, and it was arranged that they should all live together; so that old Mrs. Newall, in her declining years, was cheered, and her heart at all times gladdened, with their society.

It was a gay wedding—almost all the surrounding gentry attended it. Mary was a universal favourite; therefore hundreds waited to offer their congratulations. I gave her away, and Mrs. G—— and my daughters presented her with her marriage dress and many useful articles in housekeeping. She also received costly gifts, when the event was known to take place, from all quarters; but nothing that she wore on the occasion to beautify and adorn her comely person, attracted so much attention as the precious gem presented to her by her sovereign.

THE END.

ELEGANT AND ILLUSTRATED
BOOKS FOR YOUNG PERSONS.

THE HOLIDAY BOOK. (FIRST SERIES.) By WM. MARTIN.
Enlarged and improved. With numerous Illustrations. Seventh
Edition. Fcap. cloth. Price 3s. 6d.; or gilt edges, 4s.

THE HOLIDAY BOOK. (SECOND SERIES.) By WILLIAM
MARTIN. Enlarged and improved. With numerous Illustrations.
Seventh Edition. Fcap. cloth. Price 3s. 6d.; or gilt edges, 4s.

THE HOLIDAY BOOK. By WILLIAM MARTIN. Complete
in one thick volume. Fcap. 8vo. Price 7s.; or gilt edges, 7s. 6d.

"A work to amuse and instruct, to enlighten the mind and purify the affections."

This work has undergone considerable alterations and additions, and, owing to the varied and concise information it contains, may be termed a juvenile cyclopædia.

"In the 'Holiday Book,' an attempt has been made to carry out the original idea of the work in a style commensurate with the presumed advance of the youthful reader in all that relates to art, science, and history. Thus the present volume, while it contains much to amuse in the way of tale, anecdote, and poetry, will be found to consist of a due admixture of graver and more instructive subjects, such as the steam-engine, coal and gas, the electric telegraph, the stereoscope, etc. The engravings in this edition of the 'Holiday Book' are quite new, and have never before appeared. Care has also been taken to bring the references to scientific subjects up to the present state of knowledge."—*Preface to Second Series.*

**THE TRAVELS, VOYAGES, and ADVENTURES of
GILBERT GO-AHEAD.** By PETER PARLEY. With numerous
Illustrations. Fcap. 8vo. Price 3s. 6d.; or gilt edges, 4s.

"His descriptions of countries, scenery, manners, and customs, are strictly accurate, and may be safely trusted. As he carries the reader into parts of the world little known, I think the book may be safely commended to young readers, as combining amusement with instruction."—*Peter Parley.*

**THE BALLOON TRAVELS of ROBERT MERRY and
his YOUNG FRIENDS** over various Countries in Europe. By
PETER PARLEY. With numerous Illustrations. Fcap. 8vo. Price
3s. 6d.; or gilt edges, 4s.

"The purpose of this volume is to entertain and instruct the reader by carrying him, in imagination, with a party of adventurers in a balloon, over the most interesting portions of Europe. However it may appear to be a mere work of fancy, it is still believed that it will give the reader the advantage of seeing some interesting portions of the world in a new and striking point of view. It is an easy mode of travelling, and the opportunity it affords of rapidly passing from country to country, looking down upon each and studying it like a map, surely must prove an effectual mode of impressing their form and appearance upon the mind and memory. However the general thread of the story may be imaginary, the geographical and historical representations are designed to be correct. It is hoped, too, that the occasional passages of moral instruction, given in the conversations of Robert Merry, may be useful, by imparting sound morals and good manners. At all events, it is believed the work may contribute to the innocent pleasure of youthful readers, and for this object it is mainly intended."—*Peter Parley.*

London: JAMES BLACKWOOD, Paternoster Row.

ELEGANT AND ILLUSTRATED
BOOKS FOR YOUNG PERSONS.

STORIES ABOUT BIRDS. Numerous Illustrations. Fcap. 8vo, cloth, gilt back. Price 3s. 6d.; or gilt edges, 4s.

CONTENTS.

Birds in General—Eagle—Vulture—Hawk—Owl—Crow and Rook—Canary—Nightingale—Linnet—Lark—Bullfinch—Chaffinch—Robin—Goldfinch—Thrush—Wren—Oriole—Sparrow—Starling—Bunting—Tomtit—Nuthatch—Wagtail—Cuckoo—Blackbird—Woodpecker—Brambling Swallow—Pigeons—Humming Bird—Bird of Paradise—Parrot and Cockatoo—Parakeet—Toucan—Hoopoe—Lyre-Bird—Peacock—Ostrich—Domestic Fowls, &c., &c.

STORIES ABOUT ANIMALS. Numerous Illustrations. Fcap. 8vo, cloth, gilt back. Price 3s. 6d.; or gilt edges, 4s.

CONTENTS.

The Lion—Tiger—Leopard or Panther—Hyena—Lynx—Wolf—Jackal—Fox—Dog—Horse—Ass—Elephant—Rhinoceros—Hippopotamus—Crocodile and Alligator—Peccary—Wild Boar and Hog—Armadillo—Hedgehog—Porcupine—Giraffe—Camel and Dromedary—Buffalo—Ox and Cow—Lama—Goat—Sheep—Deer—Monkey Tribe—Squirrel—Beaver, &c., &c.

THE LONDON AND PARIS PICTURE-BOOK FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE, containing nearly 200 Illustrations. Large 4to, coloured wrapper. Price 3s. 6d.; or coloured, 5s.

MONTHS (The): A Book for All Seasons, with a short Account of the Days of the Week. By GEORGE FREDERICK PARDON, Author of "The Faces in the Fire." &c., &c.; with 12 Illustrations by McCONNELL, and coloured wrapper. Crown 4to. Price 1s.; or coloured, 2s.

ROYAL ALPHABET OF KINGS AND QUEENS, 26 Pictures. Lithographed from Copper Etchings. Crown 4to. Price 1s.; or coloured, 2s.

HISTORY (The) OF JOSEPH. Numerous Plates. Fcap. 4to, coloured wrapper. Price 1s.; or coloured, 2s.

BOY'S (The) OWN BOOK OF CELEBRATED COUNTRIES. Numerous Illustrations. Crown 4to. Price 1s.; or coloured, 2s.

WONDERFUL DRAMA OF PUNCH AND JUDY, and their Little Dog Toby, as performed to overflowing balconies at the corner of the street. Corrected and revised from the original manuscript in the possession of the King of the Cannibal Islands, by permission of his Majesty's Librarian. With Notes and References, by PAPERNOSE WOODENS CONCE, Esq. With numerous Illustrations by "The Owl." Small 4to. Price 1s.; or coloured, 2s.

London: JAMES BLACKWOOD, Paternoster Row.





